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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties due in 1999

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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Initial report of the United Arab Emirates on the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Introduction

1. The United Arab Emirates is a federal State consisting of seven Emirates, with its capital in the city of Abu Dhabi. It covers an area of 83,600 square kilometres and, according to the 1995 statistics, has a population of 2,377,453. Islam is the official religion of the State, the official language of which is Arabic. In regard to economic policy, the State has adopted an open-door free market economy. The Constitution is the principal legislative instrument from which all its laws are derived, especially those concerning basic social and economic principles and public freedoms, rights and obligations, since the articles of the Constitution cover civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

2. For example, chapter II of the Constitution, entitled "Basic social and economic principles", contains the following articles:

- Article 14: Society shall be based, inter alia, on equality, social justice, security, peace and equal opportunities for all citizens, who shall be bound together by the strongest ties of solidarity, mutual love and understanding;

- Article 15: The family, sustained by religion, morality and patriotism, shall constitute the cornerstone of society. The law shall guarantee the integrity of the family and shall safeguard and protect it against corruption;

- Article 16: Society shall cater for the welfare of mothers and children and shall protect minors and other persons who are unable to care for themselves for reasons such as sickness, infirmity, old age or involuntary unemployment. It shall assist and rehabilitate such persons for their benefit and for that of society;

- Article 17: Education is a fundamental factor in social progress. Within the Federation, it shall be compulsory at the primary level and free of charge at all levels. The requisite plans for the expansion and universalization of education at all levels and for the eradication of illiteracy shall be established by law; and

- Article 19: Society shall guarantee to all citizens health care and facilities for the prevention and treatment of diseases and epidemics and shall encourage the establishment of public and private hospitals, clinics and treatment centres.

3. The laws in force in the United Arab Emirates define the child as every human being below the age of 15 years and seek to uphold the rights of the child and to protect mothers and children in the State. This sound approach was reaffirmed in the declaration that the State promulgated pursuant to the provisions of International Labour Organization Convention No. 138 (1973) concerning minimum age for admission to employment, which are consistent with the provisions of its national law.

4. The functions of the ministries and the powers of ministers are regulated by Federal Act No. 1 of 1972, which stipulates as follows:

- Article 1: Every federal ministry shall discharge the functions assigned to it in accordance with this Act and the other federal laws, ordinances and regulations promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution;

- Article 18: Every federal ministry shall draft all the requisite laws, decrees, ordinances and regulations governing its functions and shall submit them to the Federal Council of Ministers after their wording has been reviewed by the Department of Fatwas and Legislation; and

- Article 20 of the Labour Relations Regulatory Act No. 8 of 1980 prohibits the employment of juveniles of either sex who are under 15 years of age. Articles 21-26 of the same Act contain stipulations which are likewise in the interests of the child.

5. Articles 1, 2 and 4 of Ministerial Ordinance No. 47/1 of 1980, under which institutions were exempted from some of the provisions of the Labour Relations Regulatory Act concerning the employment of juveniles and women, and Ministerial Ordinance No. 5/1 of 1981 specifying the hazardous, strenuous or unhealthy types of work in which juveniles are not permitted to work, strictly prohibit the employment of juveniles in work that is strenuous or detrimental to their health.

Table 1

Limits on work by juveniles

Age	Loads that can be carried		Loads that can be pushed on rails		Loads that can be pushed on two wheels		Loads that can be pushed on a single wheel	
15-17	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Weight in kgs.	15	10	300	150	Employment of juveniles prohibited		Employment of juveniles prohibited	

6. The provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted in 1989 and signed by the United Arab Emirates in 1996, would be an empty and meaningless framework in the absence of the social and environmental conditions, in the broad sense, needed to ensure the proper and healthy development of children free from threat, fear and disease. A cohesive family in which relations are based on love, concord and mutual respect and understanding is a prerequisite to help children to enter a world of hope and aspiration under the auspices of a legislative system characterized by justice and impartiality regardless of cultural or ethnic affiliation, gender, colour or geographic distribution.

7. Like other peoples of the world, our dream is that the dawn of the twenty-first century will be a harbinger of hope for a peaceful world and a normal socio-economic and physiological environment free from disease, malevolence, greed, avidity, domination, hegemony, narcotic drugs and pollution and that scientific and technological achievements will be used in the interests of health, well-being, justice, beauty and innocence.

I. THE PRINCIPAL LAWS, LEGISLATION AND ARTICLES CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND THE PROTECTION OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

A. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

8. Article 11 of Federal Act No. 1 of 1972, concerning the functions of ministries and the powers of ministers, stipulates as follows:

"The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs shall exercise the following functions:

1. Drafting of federal legislation on the following matters:

- Labour.
- Social insurance.
- Endeavours to combat unemployment and provide employment for citizens.
- Social services and family welfare.
- Cooperative associations and encouragement of family savings.

2. Provision of technical and material assistance to enable member Emirates to implement the above-mentioned legislation.

3. Supervision of expenditure from the federal budgetary appropriations for social affairs, in accordance with the urgent requirements of some Emirates, in agreement with the authorities of the Emirate concerned.

4. Supervision of foreign and international bodies and institutions providing or monitoring material or moral assistance in the field of employment, social welfare and charitable works, as well as supervision of their registration and guidance and support for the endeavours that they are making to serve society.

5. Any other functions assigned to the Ministry in other legislation."

9. Laws and legislation concerning children in general, including special categories (the disabled and juveniles), include:

- Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of the State;

- Council of Ministers Decision No. 5 of 1990 regulating the social affairs sector of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as amended;

- Articles 6, 9, 10, 23 and 30 of Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 concerning juvenile delinquents;

- Ministerial Ordinance No. 32/3 of 1983 concerning the statutes of juvenile reform centres;

- Federal Act No. 5 of 1997, as amended;

- Articles 1, 3, 6, 18 and 19 of Federal Act No. 13 of 1981 concerning social security, as amended by Federal Act No. 21 of 1991;

- The Council of Ministers decision regulating non-governmental welfare and rehabilitation institutions (awaiting ratification);

- Formation of a Higher Council for Children (awaiting ratification); and

- Formation of a Higher National Committee for Persons with Special Needs (awaiting ratification).

1. The Family and Child Welfare Department

10. The family consists of a group of individuals linked by bonds of kinship who may or may not be living under one roof. An extended family normally consists of a father, a mother, children, grandchildren, uncles, aunts and cousins, while a nuclear family is limited to a father, a mother and children.

11. Religions regulated the family structure on the basis of mutual affection, tenderness and solidarity and the family henceforth became a democratic institution. At all events, the family unquestionably constitutes the nucleus of society and a solid foundation for all human development.

12. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates shows great concern for the family structure and the State accords high priority to family welfare programmes in conformity with article 15 of the Constitution, which stipulates that: "The family, sustained by religion, morality and patriotism, shall constitute the cornerstone of society. The law shall guarantee the integrity of the family and shall safeguard and protect it against corruption."

13. Article 16 of the Constitution further stipulates that: "Society shall cater for the welfare of mothers and children". In accordance with Council of Ministers Decision No. 4 of 1977 regulating the functions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry is responsible for the promotion of family stability and cohesion, child welfare and the guidance of young persons.

14. The Family and Child Welfare Department comprises three sections: the Family Welfare Section; the Child Welfare Section; and the Nursery Section. The objectives of the Family Welfare Section have been defined as follows:

- To study and endeavour to solve family problems through the organization of family counselling programmes; and

- To propose and formulate the programmes of family welfare institutions and supervise their administrative bodies.

15. The Child Welfare Section has been assigned the following functions:

- To study the needs of children and determine the requirements for their upbringing, their preparation for a decent life from the health, psychological, cultural and recreational standpoints and the development of their abilities and talents; and

- To provide children with the requisite care and protection from delinquency and ensure that they enjoy a healthy environment and a proper family and social milieu through family, maternal and child-oriented activities and services.

16. The Nursery Section deals with nursery schools, which are among the most important social welfare institutions dealing directly with children. They are concerned with children at the earliest stage of their lives when the main elements of the child's personality are formed. Accordingly, the State needed to promulgate a special legislative enactment concerning nursery schools and did so in the form of Federal Act No. 5 of 1983 regulating the activities of nursery schools and subjecting them to control and supervision in order to ensure the optimum childcare.

17. This is confirmed in the implementing regulations of the Act, which specify the conditions that nursery schools must meet in regard to appropriate and healthy premises, security and safety equipment, health care, competent staff and supervisors and control mechanisms to ensure the requisite protection and care of children.

18. Article 7 of the implementing regulations of the Act stipulates as follows:

(a) Location

(i) The nursery school must be situated in a calm and quiet location in which the children will not be exposed to danger. It must meet all the security and safety requirements as laid down by the competent authorities, which shall coordinate with each other in this regard.

(ii) The location must be appropriate, close to developed areas and in a healthy environment.

(b) Premises

(i) The nursery school must be on the ground or first floor of a building consisting of a number of apartments, with empty spaces around the building in which children can engage in physical exercise, or in a villa consisting of not more than two floors covering an area appropriate to the desired purpose.

(ii) The premises must have a large planted courtyard, part of which must be roofed to protect the children from the sun and rain, covered with sand and of a size commensurate with the number of children in the nursery.

(iii) The rooms must be distributed, by age group, in such a way as to ensure that every child is allocated an area of at least 1 square metre and that there is a distance of at least 1 metre between each bed in the rooms for infants in order to prevent the spread of disease among them and facilitate the process of their supervision.

(iv) The premises must be safe, meeting the health requirements in regard to toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting and air conditioning, and must be equipped with fire extinguishers.

(v) One room, set aside as a health clinic, must contain the principal medical and first aid equipment needed for children.

(vi) A certificate must be obtained from the municipality attesting the suitability of the premises for their intended purpose.

(vii) A certificate from the competent municipality attesting ownership of the premises or a certified rent contract in the case of rented premises, must be presented.

19. Once a nursery school has been licensed by the Ministry, neither its location nor its internal design can be changed without notifying the Ministry and obtaining its approval of the change. The number of nursery schools in the various districts is determined in the light of the needs of each district and their locations are designated, with the approval of the Deputy Minister for Social Affairs, on the basis of a proposal by the competent department in the Ministry.

20. Article 13 stipulates that persons applying to work in nursery schools must meet the following conditions:

(a) They must be of praiseworthy conduct and good reputation and must not have been convicted of an offence prejudicial to honour or integrity unless they have been restored to good standing or pardoned by the competent authorities in cases in which pardon is permissible;

(b) They must be free from contagious and epidemic diseases;

(c) They must sign a contract of employment with the nursery school's administration; and

(d) Their academic qualification must not be lower than a general secon certificate, particularly in the case of directors and supervisors, and preference shou persons holding specialized educational qualifications in pedagogy and childcare. T certificates presented must be authenticated by the official authorities.

21. The staff of nursery schools must consist exclusively of females, although e this rule may be granted with the approval of the Deputy Minister. This does not ap visiting physician or persons such as drivers, guards and gardeners who are not dire in the supervision of the children.

22. Article 14 of the implementing regulations define the respective functions an nursery school staff as follows: the staff of nursery schools shall be divided into the categories, in regard to some of which exemptions may be granted, with the approva Deputy Minister, depending on the circumstances of each nursery school and the nu children enrolled therein: director, supervisor, assistant supervisor, nurse, visiting p nursemaid, bus supervisor and bus driver.

23. The director, who must be experienced in the various aspects of pedagogy a manages the nursery school and is accountable to the Ministry for its proper operati discharges the following functions:

- Specification of the responsibilities of the nursery school's supervisors a
- Enforcement of the nursery school's internal regulations;
- Planning, direction and technical supervision of the nursery school's pr social and educational activities;
- Evaluation of the work of the supervisors and reporting thereon to the M
- Helping to improve the standard of performance of the supervisors by a them to attend training courses and giving them an opportunity to study publications and research works concerning the care and upbringing of
- Promotion of closer links between the supervisors and staff under her d the children's families.

24. The supervisor is responsible for the direct supervision of children and the development of their personalities. Accordingly, she must be an alternative moth children, showing them love and affection, and must be highly knowledgeable co physical development of children and the factors that affect their health. She mus detect, and deal correctly with, the various diseases with which children might be

must be well acquainted not only with the special characteristics of the stage of childhood and the factors that influence the behaviour of children but also with the social circumstances of the children and their families and the best ways to solve their problems. She discharges the following functions:

- Planning the daily programme of activities for the group of children under her care and preparing the apparatus and equipment appropriate to those activities, with due regard for the wishes and inclinations of the children, weather conditions and other circumstances;

- Showing consideration for individual differences between children and becoming thoroughly familiar with each child through close observation, particularly during the activities, in order to discover the child's wishes, inclinations and manner of interaction with other children;

- Submission of a monthly social report on each child for inclusion in the child's personal file;

- Collaboration with the visiting physician and the nurse in order to identify problems impeding the child's development; and

- Specification of the responsibilities of her assistant and familiarizing the latter with the method to be followed in order to avoid confusing the child.

25. The assistant supervisor helps the supervisor to supervise the children during their activities, thereby easing the supervisor's workload and enabling her to give individual attention to each child.

26. The nurse is a full-time employee at the nursery school, where she assists the visiting physician by keeping health-related matters under daily surveillance. She must have passed the evaluation test set by the competent official health authorities. Her functions are as follows:

- Preparation of the children's health records and cards so that the physician can enter his observations concerning the state of health of each child;

- Daily examination of the children in order to detect any diseases with which they might be afflicted, in which case she isolates them and refers them to the physician or transfers them to hospital;

- Provision of the daily treatment prescribed by the physician for each child at the times and in the quantities specified on the health card;

- Measuring the children's weight and height at frequent regular intervals and entering the details on their health cards;

- Daily visits to the nursery school's rooms in order to verify the adequacy of their ventilation and lighting, and inspection of all its facilities, particularly the kitchen and toilets;

- Supervision of the food served to the children, as recommended by the physician, including supervision of its storage and preparation; and

- Provision of immediate first aid for any children injured in an accident.

27. The nursery school must conclude a contract with a physician, licensed by the competent official authorities, to visit it not less than twice a week and to be on call in the event of emergencies. The functions of the visiting physician are as follows:

- Thorough medical examination of the children at the time of their enrolment in the nursery school;

- Assisting the competent medical authority to coordinate the process of vaccinating the children against the contagious diseases against which they need to be immunized;

- Compilation of menus for the children, taking care to ensure that the meals are desirable, easy to prepare and appropriate to the nutritional needs of the children;

- Preparation of a medical report on each child in the light of the regular monthly examination;

- Ordering the isolation of children infected with contagious or epidemic diseases;

- Inspection of the nursery school from the standpoint of health and general hygiene, and commenting thereon in a special register maintained for that purpose; and

- Periodic examination of the nursery school's staff to ensure that they are free from contagious diseases and hold official health cards proving them to be free therefrom.

28. The function of the nursemaid, who must be experienced in dealing with children, is to keep the nursery school clean and tidy. She does not, under any circumstances, supervise the children. The function of the bus supervisor, who must be experienced in dealing with children, is to ensure the safety of the children while they are being transported from the nursery school to their homes and vice versa. The bus driver, who must be experienced in dealing with children and must hold a valid bus driver's licence issued by the competent authorities in the State, is responsible for transporting the children from the nursery school to their homes and vice versa.

29. According to the statistics for 1997 compiled by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 4,039 children were enrolled at 74 nursery schools in all parts of the State and were being cared for by 494 staff.

30. The following tables show the distribution of nursery schools by city, the distribution of their children by gender, age category and nationality and the distribution of their staff by occupation and nationality.

Table 2

Number of nursery schools, and number of their staff and children, in UAE cities in 1997

City	Number of nursery schools	Number of their staff	Number of their children
Abu Dhabi	19	122	909
Al-Ain	9	37	344
Dubai	28	244	2 034
Sharjah	13	75	636
Ajman	2	8	62
Fujairah	3	8	54
Total	74	494	4 039

Table 3

Number and gender distribution of children attending nursery schools in UAE cities in 1997

City	Males	%	Females	%	Total
Abu Dhabi	500	55	409	45	909
Al-Ain	173	50	171	50	344
Dubai	1 099	54	935	46	2 034
Sharjah	345	54	291	46	636
Ajman	33	53	29	47	62
Fujairah	21	39	33	61	54
Total	2 171	54	1 868	46	4 039

Table 4

Number of children attending nursery schools in UAE cities in 1997, by age category

City	Unweaned	%	Weaned	%	Total
Abu Dhabi	47	5	862	95	909
Al-Ain	50	15	294	85	344
Dubai	58	3	1 976	97	2 034
Sharjah	109	18	527	81	636
Ajman	11	18	51	82	62
Fujairah	3	6	51	94	54
Total	278	7	3 761	93	4 039

Table 5

Number of children attending nursery schools
in UAE cities in 1997, by nationality

City	UAE citizens	%	Arab	%	Foreign	%	Total
Abu Dhabi	88	10	152	17	669	73	909
Al-Ain	34	10	218	63	92	27	344
Dubai	168	8	123	6	1 743	86	2 034
Sharjah	59	10	275	43	302	48	636
Ajman	3	5	32	51	27	44	62
Fujairah	8	15	37	69	9	16	54
Total	360	9	837	21	2 842	70	4 039

Table 6

Occupational distribution of nursery school staff
in UAE cities in 1997

City	Director	Administrative Supervisor	Administrative clerk	Secretary	Accountant	Nurse	Assistant nurse	Supervisor	Assistant supervisor	Nursemaid	Messenger	Bus supervisor	Bus driver	Guard	Gardener
Abu Dhabi	10	3	-	3	2	8	-	51	16	13	15	-	-	1	-
Al-Ain	6	-	1	2	-	2	-	13	-	1	8	1	3	-	-
Dubai	15	-	1	5	1	16	-	81	14	63	22	1	21	4	-
Sharjah	9	-	1	-	-	8	-	22	3	14	6	-	9	3	-
Ajman	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
Fujairah	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Total	42	3	3	11	3	34	-	173	34	94	53	2	34	8	-

Table 7

Distribution of nursery school staff in UAE cities in 1997, by nationality

City	UAE citizens	Gulf	Arab	Foreign	Total
Abu Dhabi	1	-	27	94	122
Al-Ain	-	3	22	12	37
Dubai	-	-	12	232	244
Sharjah	1	4	20	50	75
Ajman	-	-	4	4	8
Fujairah	1	-	3	4	8
Total	3	7	88	396	494

2. Centres for persons with special needs (the disabled)

31. A high degree of concern is shown, at all official and private levels in the State, for the welfare of special categories, who receive moral and material support from H.H. the President of the State (may God preserve him), from Their Highnesses the members of the Supreme Council of the Federation, the Rulers of the Emirates and the Crown Princes, and from the Government. The federal and local laws and legislation regulate the methods and means used to ensure the welfare and protect the rights of special categories, as is clearly evident from the provisions of the laws and legislation to which reference has already been made in the preceding section.

32. The term "special categories" means: the disabled, juveniles, the aged and the families of convicts. The following comments concern only the disabled who, in total, constitute a proportion of no more than 8 per cent of the population and are divided into the following main categories of disability:

- Mental retardation;
- Auditory impairment;
- Visual impairment;
- Physical and motor disability;
- Autism, and
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

33. Although there are many other categories of disability, we have designated those that benefit from institutional care at governmental and private centres.

34. Disabled and other persons with special needs are divided into three categories: those who can be taught; those who can be trained; and those with severe or multiple disabilities who can neither be taught nor trained. Most of these suffer from health problems that necessitate their admission to government hospitals or to the Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Abu Dhabi for ongoing health care.

Governmental centres

35. The State, represented by the Special Categories Welfare Department at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, began to provide welfare and rehabilitation services in 1981 when two welfare and rehabilitation centres were opened at Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

36. At that time, those two centres comprised 40 classes attended by 277 male and female children. In the academic year 1997/98, a total of 783 male and female students were attending 116 classes (with an average class density of 6.75 students) at five centres distributed as follows: the Welfare and Rehabilitation Centre established at Abu Dhabi in 1981, and those established at Dubai in 1981, at Al-Ain in 1992, at Ras Khaimah in 1997, and at Fujairah in 1997. Two additional centres are currently under construction.

37. The following table shows the distribution of the disabled of both sexes among the centres, as well as the number of classes. The average class density amounts to 6.75 students.

Table 8

Disabled students at government centres

Location	Number of students			Number of classes
	Male	Female	Total	
Abu Dhabi	141	84	225	30
Dubai	150	67	217	38
Al-Ain	79	71	150	17
Ras al-Khaimah	48	37	85	15
Fujairah	64	42	106	16
Total	482	301	783	116

38. These centres provide services primarily for the following categories:

- Mental retardation (35.5 per cent of the students enrolled at the centres);
- Auditory impairment (19.67 per cent);
- Visual impairment (4.6 per cent, the least numerous category); and
- Physical and motor disability (9.96 per cent).

39. There is also a group of 237 male and female students (30.27 per cent of the total) suffering from a combination of the above-mentioned categories of disability, particularly mental retardation, auditory impairment and motor disability, who are receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

40. These centres, which accept children of both sexes from 3½ to 19 years of age, provide therapeutic health services, educated services and vocational and craft rehabilitation services.

41. Medical treatment is provided at the hospitals. However, these centres provide socio-psychological counselling services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, treatment of speech and communication disorders and thalasso therapy. They also provide mental, auditory and visual assessment services and hearing, visual and mobility aides (wheelchairs, etc.) free of charge.

42. The educational services follow the curricula adopted by the Ministry of Education, with the minor modifications required to meet the needs of persons with sensorial (deaf, dumb and blind) and motor disabilities. The educational methods used are adapted to the capacities of persons with auditory or visual impairments (sign language, Braille, etc). A workshop on a standardized language for the deaf in the Arab world was held from 3 to 13 April 1999.

43. Vocational and craft rehabilitation services are provided for all children over 14 years of age, and particularly those suffering from mental disability, in order to endow them with vocational skills, especially in traditional handicrafts, thereby enabling them to lead a productive life and facilitating their social integration.

44. In order to facilitate the process of social integration so that disabled persons are not isolated from their social environment, the centres apply the system of day care and do not offer boarding facilities. The Special Categories Welfare Department always endeavours to make its services available to the largest possible number of persons with special needs at their places of residence and in their geographic and social environment.

45. The governmental and private centres participate actively in all public national, religious and social events and take part in processions and symposia on the occasion of International Volunteer's Day, Traffic Week and Gulf Children's Week. They also participate in local, Arab and international sports and Olympic competitions and in Scout activities and camps.

46. In addition to the five above-mentioned centres, there is also a sixth production-oriented rehabilitation centre in which disabled, and particularly mentally handicapped, persons over 19 years of age are trained in agricultural work and animal husbandry, after which they are appointed at the centre. This centre, which is known as the Zayed Agricultural Centre, is regarded as an exemplary model of the action that can be taken to facilitate the integration in social and productive life of categories of disabled persons in need of supervision. The Ministry of Health operates a medical rehabilitation centre in Abu Dhabi which contains about 100 beds for persons suffering from multiple or severe disabilities who require intensive health care.

47. The five centres have established sub-units, including the interview board, the treatment group, the programme development and modification board, the monitoring and employment board, and the evaluation board.

48. Private (non-governmental) welfare and rehabilitation centres include the Nour Centre for the Training and Rehabilitation of Disabled Children (Dubai), the Dubai Special Care Centre, the Rashid Centre for the Treatment and Care of Disabled Children (Dubai), the Special Care Centre (Abu Dhabi), the Nour Centre for the Care of the Deaf, Dumb and Mentally Retarded (Abu Dhabi), the Al-Ain Welfare and Rehabilitation Centre, the International Speech Therapy Centre (Al-Ain) and the Sharjah Humanitarian Services City.

49. The Rashid Centre for the Treatment and Care of Disabled Children and the Sharjah Humanitarian Services City receive special local governmental support in the two Emirates. The Sharjah Humanitarian Services City, which charges its students a nominal fee, provides outstanding services through its Early Intervention Centre.

50. The following table shows the city's care and rehabilitation units, as well as the number of their male and female students, in the academic year 1997/98:

Table 9

Care and rehabilitation units in Sharjah

Unit	Number of students
Amal Kindergarten for the Deaf	67
Amal Institute for the Deaf	104
Mental Education Unit for the Mentally Retarded	188
Vocational Rehabilitation Unit	38
Physiotherapy Unit	16
Speech Therapy Unit	21
Early Intervention Centre for Various Disabilities	230
Total	664

51. The city hosts numerous local, Gulf and Arab symposia, workshops and seminars, publishes a specialized magazine and produces an excellent weekly television programme on disability and related matters.

52. Associations and clubs for the disabled include the Dubai Club for the Disabled (Dubai), the Emirates Disabled Sports Federation (Dubai), the Al-Thiqa Club for the Disabled (Sharjah), the Emirates Association for the Welfare and Rehabilitation of the Blind (Sharjah), the Guardians of the Disabled Association (Sharjah) and the Al-Ain Club for the Disabled (Al-Ain).

53. The governmental and private centres, with the exception of the Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Abu Dhabi, apply the system of day care. The governmental centres serve a light meal at 10 a.m. and provide their students with hearing, visual and mobility aids free of charge.

Health and safety requirements

54. The Special Categories Welfare Department, in collaboration and coordination with the Civil Defence Department, ensures that safety requirements are met at the governmental and private centres and provides protective masks and goggles, as well as special clothing and footwear, for the student trainees at the centres under its supervision. The centres are usually on the ground floor of buildings and their corridors are specially designed to facilitate the movement of the students and help them to be self-reliant.

Programmes, activities and services provided

55. In addition to the regular activities organized at the centres for the care of the disabled, such as weekly visits to public establishments and trips to cultural and information institutions, commercial and art exhibitions and archaeological, tourist and recreational locations, the centres celebrate the Prophet's Birthday and the State's national day every year and, on these occasions, their students give theatrical and recreational performances as a token of their participation in the celebrations.

56. The centres take part in the public weeks and activities that are organized throughout the Emirates, such as Hygiene Week, Traffic Week and Family Day and also celebrate Tree Planting Week and other public-awareness campaigns organized by the authorities.

57. The services provided at the centres focus on aspects of health and psychological, social, educational and vocational rehabilitation and can be summarized as follows:

- Medical, psychological and auditory diagnosis, formulation and implementation of therapeutic health, psychological and social programmes and counselling, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Cases requiring laboratory tests, surgical operations or prosthetic appliances are referred to the competent departments in the government hospitals;

- Training in speech and communication and treatment of speech defects;

- Education (basic academic subjects);

- Vocational and craft training, including carpentry, plastic and metal working, agriculture, carpet weaving, needlework, tailoring, typing and computer operation;

- Monitoring the employment of graduate students; and

- Provision of hearing and other compensatory aids for their students. They also provide diagnostic, therapeutic and counselling services, by special arrangement, for outpatients.

58. The educational programmes that are organized for the students follow the normal academic curricula with some modifications appropriate to the ages and capacities of the students.

Social integration of persons with special needs

59. The Special Categories Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is diligently seeking to rehabilitate and retrain persons with special needs in order to provide them with the social and vocational skills needed to facilitate their social integration and enable them to lead a productive life. It endeavours to ensure that a large number of persons with special needs participate in every social, national, religious, sports and recreational event in order to give them an opportunity to meet and interact with other social categories and overcome the psychological, social and material barriers impeding human contact and social integration with a view to promoting a spirit of mutual support, solidarity and equality among all citizens.

60. The Department coordinates its endeavours in this field with the Zayed Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, the Red Crescent Society and the local municipal councils in order to:

- Promote the promulgation of legislation to help qualified persons with special needs to find permanent employment in the governmental and private sectors;

- Ensure the availability of adequate facilities to ensure that persons with special needs enjoy freedom of movement and access to public transport, amenities and markets, cultural and sports clubs and facilities, and cinemas; and

- Encourage and support activities and associations organized by persons with special needs, and remove all the obstacles impeding their exercise of any form of activity or affecting their ability to become self-reliant and independent.

61. Reference has already been made to participation in religious and national activities and events and internal and external competitions and camps, such as:

- Participation by disabled persons in the Amal camp at Sharjah, the work camp for the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and product and art exhibitions throughout the year within the State and abroad, including Bahrain, Kuwait, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Sultanate of Oman, France and the United States of America where they took part in the Special Olympiad, winning some gold, silver and bronze medals and awards of merit;

- Participation by disabled persons in scouting activities. A course was organized by the Emirates Scouting Association, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, to train Scout troop leaders to work with disabled persons; and

- Participation by disabled persons in the 1998 Dubai Trade Fair, which lasted for a whole month, and in other activities in order to promote their social integration with their able-bodied peers.

Training courses for persons working with disabled children

62. The centres hold internal courses to enrich their staff's knowledge concerning disability, the causes of incapacity and handicaps and care and rehabilitation methods. In-house and external specialists also participate in refresher courses. Departmental heads and teachers have taken part in summer courses on special care which were held in London, Damascus, Kuwait and elsewhere. Computer courses have been held for the staff working in the centres. Visits were recently organized to Canada, France and Belgium for the purpose of familiarization with the latest developments and achievements in the field of care of the disabled.

Measures to assist the families of disabled persons

63. The centres for the disabled invite some families to attend counselling sessions in order to acquaint them with the best ways to handle children with special needs. Informative lectures are organized whenever required. Families are helped through the provision of hearing aids, wheelchairs and eyeglasses. The centres provide diagnostic, therapeutic and counselling services, by special arrangement, for outpatients.

64. Social, health, nutritional and environmental awareness programmes are formulated and promoted through the various information media with a view to helping to reduce the incidence of disability. Parents and guardians are encouraged to establish associations and clubs for persons with special needs.

65. Future objectives include:

- Achievement of participation and full equality as a matter of principle;
- Promulgation of legislation recognizing the national and social rights of disabled persons;
- Making welfare and rehabilitation services accessible to all individuals in need thereof;
- Large-scale promotion of preventive programmes;
- More effective utilization of the latest technological achievements for the benefit of persons with special needs; and
- Monitoring and implementation of the resolutions and recommendations of international and regional organizations concerning the disabled.

New types of services

66. Finally, by virtue of a generous personal donation from H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the President of the State (may God preserve him), following completion of the requisite studies and preparations, work will soon begin on the construction of the most

modern Middle Eastern centre for the care and rehabilitation of persons with special needs. This centre, which will be constructed in accordance with the most modern methods and architectural designs and equipped with the most sophisticated technical installations available in the international markets, will be capable of receiving more than 600 cases and providing the most highly developed diagnostic and therapeutic services. It will also provide services for categories of disabled persons for whom adequate services are not currently available at the existing centres, such as persons suffering from injuries to the spinal cord and vertebrae, autism, and hyperactivity. It is hoped that this centre, which will also include a kindergarten for early intervention, will be completed by the end of the year 2000.

67. On the threshold of the twenty-first century, we hope to make significant progress in the large-scale daily use of advanced technology for the training and rehabilitation of persons with special needs, in collaboration with the leading States in this field. To this end, we are hoping to establish, in the near future, the nucleus for a centre for research and development in this field.

68. Persons with special needs form part of the community, not solely from the quantitative standpoint but also from the standpoint of human complementarity. Since the causes and effects of disability constitute a social phenomenon, it would be unfair to expect persons with special needs to suffer alone from the adverse consequences of a phenomenon for which they cannot be held responsible.

3. Social development centres

Organizational structure of the social development centres

69. The concept of social development centres is based on article 16 of the Constitution and on the Social Security Act, which stipulates that social assistance is an expression of social solidarity with some sections of society whose health, age or educational circumstances or situation do not enable them to keep pace with the development process and the profound changes that are taking place in society. Accordingly, the aim of social assistance is to achieve the developmental objective of improving the socio-economic situation of individuals and families and providing capable categories with the vocational and craft skills needed to enable them to become self-reliant and contribute effectively to the social development process.

70. The first social development centre was opened in Abu Dhabi in 1979, after which a further 10 centres were subsequently opened in all the geographical regions of the State.

71. The following table shows the distribution of the centres among the various geographical regions, as well as the number of female staff working in each centre.

Table 10

Female staff at centre

Centre	Female staff
Dubai Development Centre	11
Sharjah Development Centre	14
Ajman Development Centre	16
Umm al-Qaiwain Development Centre	6
Ras al-Khaimah Development Centre	15
Julfar Development Centre	5
Fujairah Development Centre	5
Dibba Development Centre	4
Khor Fakkan Development Centre	7
Kalba Development Centre	3
Total	86

72. As part of their programmes for the advancement of women, the centres provide educational services for the eradication of illiteracy and hold training courses in dressmaking and embroidery, with emphasis on traditional crafts, as well as domestic science. There are also five crèches in which the students can leave their children during the training period and which offer services to develop the children's learning aptitudes, together with recreational excursions, sports activities and entertaining games.

73. The following table shows the location of these crèches and the number and approximate ages of their children.

Table 11

Crèches

Crèches	Average number of students	Sex		Approximate ages
		Male	Female	
Dubai	7	4	3	1-4 yrs.
Ajman	15	10	5	1-4 yrs.
Ras al-Khaimah	38	20	18	1-4 yrs.
Dibba	6	2	4	1-4 yrs.
Fujairah	12	6	6	2-4 yrs.

Table 12

Activities of the social development centres in 1997

Activities and programmes / Social development centres	Lectures		Cinema shows		Excursions		Field visits	Joint programmes	Literary classes			Koran memorization	Courses	Exhibitions
	Number	Participants	Number	Participants	Number	Participants			Number	Educational	Occupational			
Dubai	23	234	10	127	14	184	5	26	84	8	1	62	5	10
Sharjah	24	260	5	66	5	59	12	27	34	7	-	-	2	2
Ajman	29	726	1	45	16	267	18	34	29	4	-	85	7	4
Umm al-Qaiwain	18	363	7	101	14	328	12	29	43	9	-	-	1	5
Ras al-Khaimah	33	710	4	257	7	180	41	39	21	13	-	70	2	6
Julfar	27	596	12	238	3	26	17	33	-	-	-	15	3	8
Fujairah	29	627	4	152	5	76	6	32	10	9	-	-	2	2
Khor Fakkan	20	554	5	166	9	116	53	43	14	3	-	40	3	5
Kalba	21	461	-	-	4	53	21	34	29	9	-	75	2	2
Dibba	46	751	6	241	7	69	53	39	8	2	-	27	-	3
Total	270	5 482	54	1 393	84	1 358	238	336	272	64	1	374	27	47

74. A total of 1,151 family visits have been organized. The purpose of these visits is to promote religious, health and cultural awareness and discuss and attempt to solve family problems concerning children, divorce, etc.

75. In order to ensure family unity and cohesion and create the best conditions for the development of children, the Ministry is establishing a marital counselling and mediation system with a view to eliminating the causes of disputes and misunderstandings which might lead to separation or divorce and, consequently the break-up and disintegration of families. Female sociologists, acting in coordination with the Shari'a courts, mediate in marital disputes which are brought before the courts and ensure that divorces are granted only on the basis of the sociologist's report.

4. Associations of public benefit

76. Federal Act No. 6 of 1974, as amended, regulates the various activities and objectives of the 100 registered associations of public benefit and their 46 sub-associations. There are also nine registered solidarity funds (four in Abu Dhabi, one in Al-Ain and four in Dubai). The activities and objectives of these associations cover various fields, including voluntary, occupational, religious, social, artistic, literary and cultural activities and the operation of clubs for the foreign communities residing in the territory of the State. There are 17 registered child-related associations, most of which are engaged in charitable, religious and women's activities, although one (the Emirates Thalassaemia Association) is operating in the medical field.

77. With regard to the child's right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly, article 3 of the above-mentioned Act No. 6 stipulates that the founding member of an association must be over 18 years of age.

78. The department concerned with associations of public benefit is in the process of amending Federal Act No. 6 in a manner consistent with the far-reaching changes and new developments that have occurred in the State during the last quarter of a century.

5. The Social Security Fund

79. The Social Security Fund provides services for social categories in need of financial support in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution, particularly article 16 thereof, and in a manner consistent with the principle of social solidarity and the provisions of Federal Act No. 13 of 1981, as amended.

80. The Social Security Act of 1972, which was one of the first enactments promulgated after the establishment of the State, was amended in 1977 and 1981 and the Ministry has submitted a proposal, through the competent executive and legislative channels, for a third amendment. The amendments have led to the addition of new categories to the list of beneficiaries, which currently includes 12 categories. During the period from the establishment of the Social Security Fund to 1996, the minimum amount of assistance was increased 10 times in order to offset rises in the cost of living.

81. In 1997, the number of persons benefiting from the Social Security Act amounted to 30,265 and the value of the assistance that they received totalled 667,648,233 UAE dirhams. The extent to which children in general, and particularly those faced with special health or social circumstances, benefit from the Social Security Act is clearly evident from the list of beneficiary categories, which includes widows, divorced women, disabled persons, orphans, unmarried girls, sick and incapacitated persons, married students, families of convicts, financially insolvent persons, abandoned women and the children of female citizens married to non-citizens in the event of the latter's death or incapacity for work.

82. Under the terms of articles 17 and 18 of the Social Security Act, disabled persons and juveniles are entitled to care and vocational rehabilitation and, when applying for employment, are accorded precedence over other candidates. Moreover, those who obtain a rehabilitation certificate are exempted from the physical fitness conditions for disabled persons.

83. The Ministry is currently amending the Juvenile Delinquents Act No. 9 of 1976 in a manner consistent with the most modern methods of care.

84. The Ministry is also improving the services that it provides for disabled persons, particularly through the use of technological developments to enhance their mobility and their living and working conditions.

6. The Marriage Fund

85. Ministerial Ordinance No. 204/8 of 1995 stipulates that persons applying for the marriage grant must first undergo a medical examination and obtain a certificate attesting that they are free from contagious diseases. The purpose of this stipulation is, inter alia:

(a) To detect any cases of HIV;

(b) To detect any difference in the Rhesus factor in blood cells with a view to avoiding complications that might affect unborn or newborn infants; and

(c) To provide protection against some contagious venereal and sexually transmitted diseases that have adverse effects on the general and mental health of infants.

86. The Fund is establishing a "hotline" to provide counselling in the field of family relations in order to promote family stability and cohesion.

87. It is noteworthy that, in 1982, the State ratified International Labour Convention No. 29 of 1930 concerning forced or compulsory labour. It has also ratified the following Conventions:

- Convention No. 100 of 1951 concerning equal remuneration for work of equal value;
- Convention No. 105 of 1957 concerning the abolition of forced labour; and
- Convention No. 138 of 1973 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment, which was ratified in 1996.

Measures that the State has taken in connection with the administration of juvenile justice

88. Pursuant to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the submission of reports on the implementation of the said Convention and on the legislative measures taken in connection with the administration of juvenile justice as required in article 40 of the Convention, and in accordance with the general principles and guidelines concerning the form and content of the reports that States parties are required to submit, in conformity with article 44, paragraph 1, of the Convention, on the measures that the State has taken in compliance with article 40, concerning the administration of juvenile justice, and article 37, concerning children deprived of their liberty through, inter alia, any form of detention, imprisonment or placement in custodial institutions, we wish to refer to the legislative and other measures that have been taken in accordance with the above-mentioned articles in order to give a clear idea of the manner in which these measures, legislative enactments, provisions and regulatory mechanisms are being implemented.

89. With regard to the provisions of article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the administration of juvenile justice, Federal Act No. 9 of 1976, concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants, specifies 7 years as the minimum age below which children cannot be referred to a juvenile court. Article 6 of the Act stipulates that criminal proceedings cannot be brought against a juvenile delinquent under 7 years of age. However, in all cases, the investigating authorities or the courts may order educational or remedial measures appropriate to the juvenile's situation if they deem such measures to be necessary. Accordingly, children brought before the courts must be over 7 years of age, this being the age of discretion at which a child is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong although, unlike adults, has not reached the stage of full maturity and, therefore, is frequently guided by instincts and is unable to adapt fully to society.

90. The above-mentioned Act adopts the principle that a juvenile judgement is provisional and can be reviewed, at any time, by the court which handed it down, if a request to that effect is submitted by the Department of Public Prosecutions, by the juvenile or by the juvenile's guardian, probation officer or lawyer, provided that the court believes that the reform or preventive measures are inappropriate for the convicted person. This principle is clearly established in article 35 of the Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants Act, which stipulates that: "After studying the reports submitted to it, the court may decide, on its own initiative or on the basis of a petition by the juvenile, his guardian, his probation officer or his lawyer, to suspend or terminate a measure that it has ordered. The decision of the court shall under no circumstances be subject to appeal and a further petition may not be submitted within three months from the date of the said decision".

91. Articles 36 and 37 of the Act permit the annulment of a decision without the need to resort to the normal channels of appeal. Under the terms of article 36, "If a defendant is sentenced on the assumption that he is over 18 years of age and official documents subsequently prove him to be under 18 years of age, the Department of Public Prosecutions shall bring the matter to the attention of the court that pronounced the sentence so that it can annul the sentence and pass judgement in the case in accordance with the rules and procedures laid down for the prosecution of juveniles". According to article 37: "If a defendant is sentenced to any of the

measures prescribed for juveniles and official documents subsequently prove him to be over 18 years of age, the Department of Public Prosecutions shall bring the matter to the attention of the court which pronounced the sentence so that it can annul the sentence and pass judgement in the case in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure".

92. It should be noted that, as a general principle, the juvenile courts sit in camera, unlike the ordinary courts, since their proceedings concern only the juvenile and his family and, consequently, their sessions can be attended only by persons who, by virtue of their functions, are required to be present in the courtroom.

93. This principle is confirmed in article 29 of the Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants Act, which stipulates as follows: "Juvenile hearings shall be conducted in camera and shall be attended only by the juvenile's guardian, witnesses, lawyers and representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and of juvenile institutions and other persons whose presence is authorized by the court, which may exempt the juvenile from the obligation to attend the hearing in person and may decide to hear the witnesses in his absence if it believes such to be in the juvenile's best interests. However, the court shall not convict the juvenile before explaining to him the proceedings that have taken place during his absence and the judgement must be handed down at a public session."

94. It should be noted that it is prohibited to publish or broadcast the record of the proceedings of juvenile courts in the press, on the radio, in books or through any other public information medium. It is also prohibited to publish any details or photographs that would identify the juvenile. Only the text of the judgement can be published, without mentioning the juvenile's name. The judicial authority endeavours to ensure that juveniles are tried in an independent and impartial manner and, to this end, provides them with appropriate assistance, including legal counsel and testimony during proceedings which are attended by their parents or legal guardians in accordance with the provisions of article 32, paragraph 2, of the Convention.

95. The verbal nature of the pleading process is an important guarantee of basic human rights. In fact, no one can be prosecuted on the basis of documentary evidence or the testimony of witnesses without being given an opportunity to freely question the evidence and cross-examine the witnesses. However, the juvenile court is not obliged to follow this procedure if it feels that the juvenile, by being present, might suffer a severe psychological shock or trauma that would render ineffective any remedial measures that might be taken in his interests. Accordingly, in order to avoid compelling a juvenile to testify, to confess guilt or to examine witnesses, article 29, paragraph 2 (c), of the Act stipulates that: "The court may exempt a juvenile from attending the proceedings in person, and may decide to hear witnesses in his absence, if it feels that his interests so require".

96. Article 31 of the same Act further stipulates that: "Any proceedings of which, by law, the juvenile must be made aware shall be notified to one of his parents or, as appropriate, to his guardian or the person responsible for him, who shall be entitled to contest, in the legally prescribed manner and in the juvenile's interests, any decision taken". The above-mentioned

article 29 implies that the general rule is that the juvenile should appear in person, his representation by proxy being an exception to which resort is made only if his interests so require. If the court is inclined to convict the juvenile, his representation by proxy is deemed insufficient and he is required to attend in person so that the proceedings that took place in his absence can be explained to him.

97. In conformity with the provisions of article 40, paragraph 3, of the Convention, concerning the establishment of a minimum age below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law, and concerning measures to deal with such children without resorting to judicial proceedings provided that human rights and legal safeguards are fully respected, we wish to point out that article 6 of Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 concerning juvenile delinquents and vagrants stipulates that: "Criminal proceedings shall not be brought against a juvenile delinquent under seven years of age. However, in all cases, the investigating authorities or the courts may order educational or remedial measures appropriate to the juvenile's situation if they deem such measures to be necessary." The Act therefore sets the minimum age at 7 years, even if the juvenile is found to be capable of exercising discretion at a younger age. The Act also stipulates that, if a juvenile is found to have been incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong at the time of his commission of an act, the judge should not sentence him to any penalty whatsoever but should merely order appropriate educational and remedial measures.

98. Under the terms of article 30 of the above-mentioned Federal Act: "Before a juvenile is sentenced, the court shall look into his financial and social situation, the extent to which he is capable of acting with discretion, the environment in which he grew up, the reasons that prompted him to commit the offence or to become a vagrant and the measures that would be most conducive to his reform. If the court believes that the juvenile's physical, mental, psychological or social situation necessitates observation and study before a judgement is handed down in his case, it shall order his placement in a surveillance centre, or in any other place designated by the court, for a specified period of time and the proceedings shall be suspended pending completion of the observation and study." This is in keeping with the provisions of the Convention, which stipulate that a child should be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law, after taking into account all the circumstances of the child's life which, directly or indirectly, might have led to his or her delinquency. As a general principle, therefore, the juvenile judge must acquaint himself fully with all the circumstances that might have led to the juvenile's delinquency or vagrancy in order to be able to determine the measure most appropriate in his or her case.

99. Hence, the judge has an obligation to thoroughly study the juvenile's personality and to listen very attentively to his or her statements in order to understand their true implications, since some details which might appear insignificant might actually be of primordial importance for a proper understanding of a young mentality and failure to pay attention thereto could lead to a misunderstanding of the juvenile's true circumstances. The judge must make the juvenile understand that the intention is not to punish but merely to educate with a view to ensuring the juvenile's social rehabilitation.

100. Article 6 of the Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants Act stipulates that: "Criminal proceedings shall not be brought against a juvenile delinquent under seven years of age. However, in all cases, the investigating authorities or the courts may order educational or remedial measures appropriate to the juvenile's situation if they deem such measures to be necessary".

101. Article 7 of the same Act stipulates that: "If a juvenile over seven but under 16 years of age commits an offence punishable under the Penal Code or any other legislation, the judge shall order the measures that he deems appropriate". Accordingly, the measure that the judge orders takes into account the age of the juvenile who, in most cases, is delivered into the custody of his guardian or the person responsible for his upbringing.

102. Under the terms of article 8 of the same Act: "If a juvenile over 16 years of age commits an offence punishable under the Penal Code or any other legislation, the judge may, at his discretion, sentence him to the measures provided for in this Act instead of the prescribed penalties".

103. Under article 9 of the Act, it is prohibited to sentence a juvenile to capital punishment, imprisonment or a fine. Article 10 specifies the following reduced penalties that may be imposed on a juvenile:

(a) In cases in which a juvenile may be sentenced to a criminal penalty, the penalty of capital punishment or imprisonment prescribed for the offence that he committed shall be commuted to a term of not more than 10 years' detention;

(b) If the offence that the juvenile committed is punishable by detention, the term of detention to which he is sentenced shall not exceed half the maximum term prescribed for the offence in question; and

(c) The term of detention to which the juvenile may be sentenced under the terms of this article shall be served in special establishments in which social welfare and educational facilities are available. The juvenile court shall impose a criminal penalty on a juvenile convicted of committing a serious offence in order to deter him and others from committing similar offences. A criminal penalty shall also be imposed if the court has reason to believe that a re-educational measure would be ineffective and inappropriate and that the imposition, or threatened imposition, of a penalty would be more effective in deterring or intimidating the juvenile.

104. In accordance with article 37 (c) of the Convention, which specifies the legislative and other measures needed to ensure that every child deprived of liberty enjoys the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits and that the institutions in which children are placed are supervised and monitored by an independent authority, article 34 of section IV of Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 concerning juvenile delinquents stipulates that: "Every institution specialized in the welfare and reform of juveniles, and any other premises intended for their reception, shall be supervised by a board chaired by a representative of the

Department of Public Prosecutions and including among its members the director of the institution and a specialist appointed by the Minister for Social Affairs. The persons sentenced to placement in such institutions shall be released only on the recommendation of the said board."

105. Further reference to this board is made in article 33 of Ministerial Ordinance No. 32/2 of 1983 promulgating the Statutes of Juvenile Welfare and Reform Centres, which stipulates that every such unit must have a supervisory board, chaired by a representative of the Department of Public Prosecutions within the jurisdiction of which the unit is located and including among its members the director of the unit and a representative delegated by the Deputy Minister, which shall meet once every 15 days and shall exercise the following functions:

(a) Study, and submit to the court, recommendations for the release of convicted persons;

(b) Participate in the formulation of the general policy, and in the organization of the work and activity programmes, of the unit; and

(c) Help to solve any problems that the unit encounters.

106. In accordance with article 37 (c), which specifies the legislative measures needed to ensure that every child deprived of liberty enjoys the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, article 18 of the Statutes of Juvenile Welfare and Reform Centres promulgated in Ministerial Ordinance No. 32/2 of 1983 stipulates that: "The inmates shall be permitted to visit their families on official holidays if their guardians so request". The same article further stipulates that the supervisory board provided for in article 33 is empowered to authorize visits in order to enable detainees to spend holidays with their families.

107. In conformity with the above-mentioned article of the Convention, concerning periodic review of the cases of children placed in institutions, article 35 of Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 stipulates that, after studying the reports submitted to it, the court may decide, on its own initiative or on the basis of a petition by the juvenile, his guardian or the person responsible for him, as appropriate, to modify, suspend or terminate the measures that it has ordered against the juvenile. It further stipulates that the decision of the court shall under no circumstances be subject to appeal and that a further petition may not be submitted within three months from the date of the said decision.

108. With regard to article 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, concerning measures at the legislative and other levels to ensure that neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release are imposed for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age, article 9 of Federal Act No. 9 of 1976 prohibits the imposition of capital punishment, imprisonment or a fine on a juvenile and further stipulates that the criminal penalty must be commuted to a term of not more than 10 years' detention. Under article 10 of the Act, the term of detention to which a juvenile may be sentenced must be served in special establishments in which social welfare and educational facilities are available.

109. In accordance with article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, concerning physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children, article 19, paragraphs (a)-(j), in section V of the Statutes of Juvenile Welfare and Reform Centres refers to the need to cater for the social, psychological, health, educational, religious, vocational and recreational welfare of all inmates through the activities provided for in the said Statutes.

B. The Ministry of the Interior

110. The Ministry of the Interior is one of the official bodies concerned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly since the Convention contains provisions relating to the questions of nationality, residence and the treatment of juvenile delinquents and vagrants, all of which fall within the jurisdiction and terms of reference of the Ministry's various departments.

111. The Ministry of the Interior discharges its functions in accordance with the laws and procedures in force and, in particular, with articles 14, 25 and 26 of the Constitution under which all citizens have a right to equality, equal opportunities and social justice. These provisions obviously apply, above all, to children since, in order to prevent discriminatory practices, the law is applicable to all without any discrimination.

112. The legal provisions of the Entry and Residence of Foreigners Act No. 6 of 1973, as amended, and of its implementing regulations are in full conformity with article 10, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child under which applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a country for the purpose of family reunification must be dealt with by States parties in a humane manner. To this end, the first paragraph of article 57 (b) and article 65 (b) of the implementing regulations for the Entry and Residence of Foreigners Act specify the procedures to be followed for the issue of a residence (but not a work) permit to anyone applying therefor in order to join the head of his family or his guardian or for purposes of family reunification.

113. Article 29 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of movement and residence within the limits of the law which, however, imposes some restrictions in this regard. For example, article 94, paragraph 1, of the implementing regulations for the Entry and Residence of Foreigners Act No. 6 of 1973, as amended, prohibits the following blacklisted persons from leaving the State:

- Anyone against whom an order has been issued by the Attorney-General or his representative in connection with a case under investigation;

- Anyone against whom a written order has been issued by a competent court in connection with a case that it is hearing; and

- Anyone who is held liable for the payment of money due to the Government. In such a case, the prohibition order must be issued by the competent Minister.

114. Under the terms of article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States parties have an obligation to take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad. In this connection, article 344, paragraph 5, of the Federal Penal Code stipulates that it is a criminal offence, punishable by life imprisonment, to abduct or detain children or deprive them of their liberty.

115. Under article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, no child may be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment may be imposed for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age. In conformity with this provision, article 29 of the Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants Act No. 9 of 1976 stipulates that no juvenile may be sentenced to capital punishment, imprisonment or a fine in order to avoid subjecting the juvenile to cruel or inhuman treatment as a result of such penalties.

116. Moreover, articles 349 and 350 of the Federal Penal Code designate as criminal offences any acts that result in a child being subjected to torture or other cruel or inhuman treatment or otherwise endangered through, in particular, deprivation of the food and care that a child requires and which the offender has a legal obligation to provide.

117. The Juvenile Delinquents and Vagrants Act No. 9 of 1976 contains clear provisions concerning the manner in which juvenile delinquents and vagrants should be treated in order to safeguard their rights as laid down in article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

118. Article 1 of the said Act defines a juvenile as a person who, at the time of his commission of an act for which he is held answerable, was under 18 years of age. Article 6 of the Act further stipulates that criminal proceedings cannot be brought against a juvenile under 7 years of age and that, in all cases, the investigating authorities or the courts may order educational or remedial measures appropriate to the juvenile's situation if they deem such measures to be necessary.

119. Under the terms of article 9, a juvenile cannot be sentenced to capital punishment, imprisonment or a fine. In accordance with article 10, the penalty of capital punishment or imprisonment which is legally prescribed for the offence must be commuted to a penalty of detention and, if the legally prescribed penalty is a term of detention, the sentence imposed on a juvenile must not exceed half of the prescribed maximum term and must be served in special establishments in which social welfare and educational facilities are available.

120. Article 30 of the Act stipulates that, before a juvenile is sentenced, the court must look into his financial, psychological and social situation, the extent to which he is capable of acting with discretion, the environment in which he grew up, the reasons that prompted him to commit the offence or to become a vagrant and the measures that would be most conducive to his reform. Under the terms of article 23, the court may order the juvenile's placement in an appropriate rehabilitation institution or in a juvenile welfare and reform centre run or recognized by the State.

121. According to article 37 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age and, in particular, the child must be separated from adults.

122. Article 40, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child further stipulates that a variety of dispositions, such as care, guidance and supervision orders; counselling; probation; foster care; education and vocational training programmes and other alternatives to institutional care should be available to ensure that children are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and the offence.

123. Federal Act No. 43 of 1992, which regulates reform and penal institutions, and its implementing regulations set forth the rules and principles for the treatment of juveniles in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 of the Act defines the three categories of penal institutions: institutions for men, institutions for women and institutions for juveniles sentenced to detention in which care must be taken to segregate the two sexes.

124. Article 49 of the said Act makes provision for the rehabilitation of juveniles and stipulates that, to that end, a board shall be formed which, with the help of experts and specialists, shall be responsible for formulating annual education and rehabilitation programmes for juveniles and considering the legally specified privileges that they may be granted.

125. In accordance with article 51 of the said Act and article 90 of its implementing regulations, juveniles may be permitted to leave the penal institution for a period of not more than three days on the occasion of public holidays or the death of a parent, a brother or a sister, or in other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the officer in charge of the penal institution, in accordance with the rules laid down by the juvenile rehabilitation board and provided that the juvenile meets the conditions specified in article 91 of the implementing regulations.

126. Under the terms of article 52 of the Act and articles 98-101 of the implementing regulations, permission may be granted, by decision of the Minister of the Interior, for juveniles to work in any commercial or industrial establishment or any enterprise or company on the basis of a recommendation by the juvenile rehabilitation board and in accordance with the rules laid down in the Act and its implementing regulations.

127. Articles 72 to 85 grant convicts, including juveniles, the right to have a mosque or an appropriate place in which to pray and attend religious lectures and discussion groups. Every penal institution must also have an almoner, a sociologist and a psychologist and inmates wishing to study are permitted to register with the Ministry of Education, receive the requisite books and sit examinations in order to help them to acquire knowledge and qualifications in accordance with the established rules and regulations.

128. Article 8 of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates stipulates that citizens of the Federation shall have a single nationality defined by law and, when abroad, shall enjoy the protection of the Federal Government in accordance with recognized international practice. Moreover, a citizen's nationality may be forfeited or withdrawn only in the exceptional circumstances provided for by law.

129. Article 2 of the Federal Nationality Act No. 17 of 1972, as amended by Act No. 10 of 1975, defines citizenship of the United Arab Emirates by stipulating that residence by ascendants supplements residence by descendants and that a father or mother of UAE origin is entitled to pass on this nationality to his or her descendants since, by law, the following persons are deemed to be citizens:

- Those born in or outside the State to a father who is a legal citizen of the State;
- Those born in or outside the State to a mother who is a legal citizen, even if their paternity has not been legally established;
- Those born in or outside the State to a mother who is a legal citizen by an unknown or stateless father; and
- Those born in the State to unknown parents, foundlings being deemed to have been born therein failing proof to the contrary.

130. Under the laws in force in the State, including the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure, minor children have the right to bring criminal or civil actions through their guardians. In this connection, in order to safeguard the rights of the child, the Code of Civil Procedure stipulates that the Department of Public Prosecutions must intervene in any civil action brought against a minor in order to protect the rights and interests of the child.

131. Given the above circumstances in which UAE nationality can be acquired, the State regards the acquisition of nationality as an internal matter regulated by the rules and conditions laid down in its national legislation and, therefore, expressed a reservation concerning article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

132. In short, the Ministry of the Interior is applying the rights of the child in the light of the provisions of the relevant national legislation and trusts that this report will have shown that the laws with which the Ministry is concerned are consistent with the letter and the spirit of the rights recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

133. With regard to prevention of the consumption by children of alcoholic beverages, tobacco and other controlled substances, the laws in force prohibit the production, importation and sale of alcoholic beverages, the acquisition of which is strictly limited to adult non-Muslims, who can obtain them, on presentation of a special permit, from licensed distributors. The State conducts

intensive campaigns, through the Ministry of Health, to combat smoking and levies high taxes on tobacco products. The legislation concerning narcotic drugs is strictly enforced, particularly in regard to trafficking therein, and treatment, medicine and rehabilitation services are available to any addicts wishing to benefit therefrom, and particularly to those under 18 years of age, with due regard for the need to keep their identity confidential.

C. The Ministry of Health

134. The Ministry of Health attaches special importance to preventive and public awareness programmes and has developed mother and child-oriented programmes to combat contagious, epidemic and endemic diseases and promote school and occupational health services, the registration of births and deaths and health education programmes.

135. Since 99 per cent of births take place in hospitals and specialized clinics, newborn children are systematically registered by the registrars of the State's preventive health departments, who are also responsible for issuing official birth certificates in respect of all children born live in the State. The following table shows the number of births registered in the United Arab Emirates in 1997.

Table 13

Births registered in 1997

Medical district	Citizens			Non-Citizens			Total		
Abu Dhabi	2 571	2 365	4 936	3 513	3 296	6 809	6 084	5 661	11 745
Western Region	283	249	532	264	261	525	547	510	1 057
Al-Ain	1 916	1 662	3 578	1 947	1 844	3 791	3 863	3 506	7 369
Dubai	3 081	3 048	6 129	3 983	3 844	7827	7 064	6 892	13 956
Sharjah	1 145	1 144	2 289	1 637	1 640	3 277	2 782	2 784	5 566
Ajman	181	161	342	476	457	933	657	618	1 275
Umm al-Qaiwain	176	191	367	212	182	394	388	373	761
Ras al-Khaimah	904	877	1 781	479	510	989	1 383	1 387	2 770
Fujairah	797	805	1 602	320	291	611	1 117	1 096	2 213
Total	11 054	10 502	21 556	12 831	12 325	25 156	23 885	22 827	46 712

136. All the health indicators show positive changes which reflect the effectiveness of the development and modernization plans and of the comprehensive and integrated health care programmes. For example, in 1997, the infant mortality rate declined to 8.46 per thousand, the mortality rate among children under 5 years of age declined to 11.02 per thousand live births and the maternal mortality rate declined to one case per 100,000 live births.

137. This is clearly illustrated by the success of the plans to finally eradicate poliomyelitis in the Emirates, where no case of this disease has been reported in the last six years and the highly successful plans for the total eradication of the virus that causes this disease have also been almost completed. No case of diphtheria was reported last year in the Emirates and neonatal tetanus has been virtually eradicated as only one case per 10,000 births was reported last year.

138. A full range of preventive and therapeutic health care services is available to all children living in the territory of the State, without discrimination on grounds of nationality, colour, gender or religion, at the clinics and hospitals run by the federal and local government authorities.

Medical counselling

139. Medical counselling for children is provided at the maternal and childcare clinics and departments. In the early stages of their lives, children obviously attend those health institutions in the company of their mothers or the persons responsible for their welfare.

140. Children of pre-school age who are enrolled at kindergartens, as well as primary and preparatory school students, undergo routine medical examinations at the beginning of each academic year or whenever necessary and educational institutions can refer sick students to school health clinics without the need for parental permission. However, approval must be obtained from the child's guardian if intensive medical treatment or surgery is required.

141. Medical diagnosis and counselling services, as well as medicines, treatment and vaccinations against diseases and epidemics, are available to all children living in the territory of the State, without any discrimination.

Measures to ensure protection and care:

(a) The expanded immunization programme

142. Since 1981, the State has been implementing a national immunization programme, which began with vaccinations against only six diseases: tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and poliomyelitis. The coverage rates of these vaccinations gradually increased to more than 90 per cent in 1997 by virtue of the intensive public awareness programmes targeting the categories concerned. In 1986, the measles-mumps-rubella vaccination was added

to the list of vaccinations scheduled in the national programme for children under 5 years of age and, in 1991, the vaccination against viral hepatitis B was also added. The vaccination against haemophilus influenzae B will be added in early 1999.

143. It is noteworthy that, in addition to the vaccines targeting children under 5 years of age, the programme also aims to monitor children attending school for the first time and other vaccinations are administered in the event of contact with persons suffering from other diseases. The Ministry diligently monitors all new developments in this field and applies them at the local level.

144. The quantities of vaccines administered have increased to the following figures: 250,000 doses of poliomyelitis vaccine; 165,000 doses of BCG vaccine; 175,000 doses of viral hepatitis B vaccine; 60,000 doses of measles vaccine; 130,000 doses of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine; and 250,000 doses of diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT) vaccine.

(b) The programme for the eradication of poliomyelitis

145. The programme for the eradication of poliomyelitis has successfully achieved its objectives, as no case of this disease has been reported since the beginning of 1993. The incidence of numerous other diseases among the population has also declined during the last 10 years. The Ministry has completed three national campaigns to vaccinate children against poliomyelitis and a fourth campaign is currently being conducted to cover about 250,000 children in a single month. About 1 million doses have been administered during these campaigns.

(c) The programme for the eradication of measles

146. The Ministry of Health has formulated a national plan for the eradication of measles in the State during the next few years. The programme makes provision of the maintenance of high coverage rates for the measles vaccination and the development of a monitoring system to ensure that all cases discovered are examined and treated. In order to achieve the goal of eradication, the Ministry will be conducting a campaign to immunize all children and students from the age of 9 months to 18 years, approximately 750,000 persons.

147. During the first phase of the campaign, which will begin in November 1998, initial and booster doses of the poliomyelitis vaccine will be administered to children from 9 months to 5 years of age, those from 5 to 18 years of age being vaccinated in February 1999.

148. The following table shows the total number of births and the immunization coverage rates in the United Arab Emirates in the years 1977, 1987 and 1997.

Table 14

Immunization rates for children

Indicator	1977	1987	1997
Total births	26 673	47 950	46 712
Immunization coverage rate			
Tuberculosis	15%	60%	98%
Triple vaccine	11%	80%	96%
Poliomyelitis	11%	80%	92%
Measles	24%	66%	95%
Hepatitis B	-	-	90%

149. Within the context of its care and protection measures, the Ministry of Health is preparing a programme to combat the complications resulting from iodine deficiency by adding iodine to table salt. The Ministry's Central Maternal and Child Care Directorate, which is the body responsible for this programme, is making preparations for the provision of all the facilities needed to implement this programme.

150. Children's weight, height and cranial measurements are monitored at regular periodic intervals at the health and maternal and childcare centres.

151. Female specialists and nurses are making mothers aware of the importance of monitoring the growth of their children and are explaining to them how to deal with any health or nutritional problems that might impede their growth.

Public and private medical facilities for the care and protection of children

1. Governmental centres

(a) Maternal and childcare

152. All the strategies and programmes for the development of health-care services attach great importance to maternal and childcare. The principal activities in this field include maternal care, in which mothers benefit from the pre- and post-natal monitoring and other health services that are provided at 9 specialized maternal and childcare centres, 95 health centres, 4 specialized gynaecological and maternity hospitals and 14 public hospitals with gynaecological and maternity departments. By virtue of the wide availability of these services and the sophisticated health and maternal care programmes that have been formulated, the maternal mortality rate has declined to a level comparable to that in the countries which are the most advanced in the health field. According to the statistics, more than 97 per cent of all births take place in hospital under medical supervision and the perinatal mortality rate has decreased to less than two per 100,000 births, which is similar to the rate prevailing in the developed countries.

153. The maternal and childcare centres and the clinics attached to the health centres provide health services for expectant mothers from early pregnancy to the beginning of the eighth month, after which they are referred to the hospital in which they will be giving birth. The services include clinical examinations of the mother, in order to ensure the sound natural development of her unborn child, and preparing the mother physically and psychologically to receive the child, including preparation for breastfeeding. More than 95 per cent of pregnant women are monitored at the health and maternal and childcare centres, which they visit at least three times before delivery.

154. Post-natal maternal care services are also provided in order to ascertain the mother's well-being, assist her in the breastfeeding process, answer her questions and provide her with counselling on childcare.

155. Childcare services, which include measurement of growth and development, are provided at the 9 maternal and childcare centres and at 83 health centres. The vaccination services, which are provided in accordance with the national immunization programme, include vaccination against tuberculosis, whooping cough, tetanus, measles-mumps-rubella and viral hepatitis. This programme has achieved coverage rates in excess of 90 per cent of all children under one year of age.

156. The Maternal and Child Care Directorate is making every endeavour to promote breastfeeding and is encouraging the largest possible number of hospitals to become child-friendly.

157. The directorate has established a nutrition division which is responsible for ensuring the comprehensive nutritional welfare of mothers and children. The Ministry of Health attaches special importance to the early detection of breast cancer among women and, to this end, uses specialized radiographic examination equipment.

158. The following table shows the maternal and child health-care indicators for the years 1977, 1987 and 1997.

Table 15

Maternal and child health care

Health indicators	1977	1987	1997
Proportion of mothers receiving prenatal care	-	-	90%
Proportion of mothers receiving care during childbirth	40%	85%	90%

Hereditary diseases

159. The considerable progress that has been made in the health field is illustrated by the establishment of a special clinic for hereditary diseases. The Maternal and Child Care Directorate has also formulated an integrated strategy for the conduct of in-depth studies with a view to the compilation of a database on hereditary diseases, the establishment of a National

Committee on Hereditary Diseases and Congenital Abnormalities and the development of a genetic clinic for early detection, counselling and education purposes. Newborn infants are also currently being tested for phenylketonuria (PKU) and more than 65,000 children have so far been examined.

School health

160. School health services began in a modest manner in the late 1960s in Abu Dhabi and the northern Emirates. In the early days of the Federation, and specifically in the academic year 1971/72, the number of physicians working in the field of school health amounted to no more than 4, together with 2 dentists and 30 nurses providing health-care services for about 40,139 male and female students at 129 schools. By 1986, the number of physicians had increased to 83, with 14 dentists and 319 nurses. By 1996, the school health services had been expanded to cover about 295,000 students at 615 government schools served by 87 physicians, 22 dentists and 365 nurses. The Ministry is in the process of extending its school health services to the private sector, which caters for about 195,000 students at 388 schools. It is noteworthy that, in 1997, the school health clinics were attended by more than 258,000 students.

161. In addition to providing treatment and diagnostic services and stimulating health awareness, the school health authorities are also responsible for ensuring a hygienic school environment. The objective is to promote the physical, psychological, mental and social health of students from the kindergarten stage until the completion of their secondary studies and to provide the preventive and therapeutic services needed to ensure a healthy environment that will help them to make progress in their education and continue their studies without any health-related impediments. To this end, the school health authorities promote health education, enhance preventive health awareness, protect students from various contagious, epidemic and parasitic diseases, safeguard them against psychological and social aberrations, ensure a hygienic and safe school environment, provide students with all the requisite treatment and emergency services, supervise the nutritional quality of the meals served in school cafeterias and cater for the health and welfare of disabled students in order to facilitate their education as far as possible.

162. In order to achieve these aims, every school has a medical clinic staffed by a full-time male or female nurse who assists the school physician in all his therapeutic, preventive and health education duties and oversees the school environment and school meals. The physician, who is responsible for the supervision of three or four school clinics, carries out thorough medical examinations of the students at periodic intervals, provides medical care in the event of emergencies and whenever a student is afflicted with a contagious or non-contagious disease, prescribes appropriate medicine for treatment, ensures that students are physically fit to engage in sports activities, administers the stipulated vaccinations, controls the school environment and participates in health education programmes.

163. The school health authorities provide numerous programmed preventive services, including a thorough medical examination of new students (first primary grade) and of students in the fourth primary, first preparatory and first secondary grades, administration of the various vaccinations needed to combat contagious diseases, and comprehensive surveys to ascertain the incidence of various diseases among students, such as malnutrition, undernutrition, anaemia due

to iron or iodine deficiency, trachoma and parasitic diseases. The school environment and the meals provided in school cafeterias are kept under surveillance and all diseases are reported so that immediate measures can be taken to prevent the spread of contagion. Health education and awareness campaigns are conducted and health records and statistics are maintained.

164. The following table compares the school health services enjoyed by students at government and private schools in the State in 1986 and 1996.

Table 16

School health services in public and private schools

Number of students and schools	Academic year			
	1986		1996	
	Government	Private	Government	Private
Total number of students	179 276	70 291	295 322	195 586
Number of schools	395	164	615	388
Medical staff	Number	Student/staff ratio	Number	Student/staff ratio
Physicians	83	2 160	87	3 400
Dentists	14	12 800	22	13 400
Nursing staff	Number	Student/staff ratio	Number	Student/staff ratio
Nurses	319	560	365	810

Health education

165. The Ministry of Health shows special concern for health education as an effective method to change behaviour and concepts that might adversely affect individual and collective health and safety and cause serious health problems. Accordingly, the Ministry has established a Central Health Education Department, with sub-departments in all the health districts, which has diligently developed plans and programmes of action to deal with health problems by raising the level of public health awareness. These programmes make provision for numerous activities, such as health seminars, lectures and workshops, in addition to optimum utilization of the information media to transmit health education messages and information to all sections of society with a view to furthering the national programmes to combat smoking and cancer and encourage breastfeeding, etc. The department is also endeavouring to introduce programmes to enhance the personal and social abilities of children by endowing them with the life skills needed to enable them to avoid engagement in unhealthy patterns of behaviour.

166. The following table shows the school health services provided, by district (urban and nomadic), in 1996:

Table 17

School health services, by district

Medical district	Ratios			Average number of visits per student	Number of students	Number of visits
	Student/ clinic	Student/ nurse	Student/ physician			
Abu Dhabi	588	678	2 058	1.07	61 479	65 811
Western Region	1 368	1 617	5 927	1.41	12 567	17 782
Al-Ain	511	585	2 223	0.75	58 972	44 452
Dubai	409	460	1 672	0.93	39 384	36 792
Sharjah	343	530	2 589	0.62	37 318	23 303
Ajman	286	404	2 342	0.61	19 065	11 710
Umm al-Qaiwain	423	423	1 451	1.37	7 394	10 160
Ras al-Khaimah	456	730	2 129	0.76	33 522	25 545
Fujairah	651	1 378	7 807	1.16	20 211	23 420
Total	491	627		0.89	289 912	258 975

2. Private or non-governmental health institutions

167. In all parts of the State, and particularly in the more densely populated areas, there are a number of private hospitals, medical centres and clinics which offer sophisticated health services at various prices and provide ample care for mothers and children.

168. The following public health statistical indicators illustrate the services that the State is providing for children, whom it regards as the future of the nation.

- Proportion of the population enjoying access to clean water: 85.3 per cent (1994);
- Proportion of the population benefiting from sewage services: 90 per cent (1994);
- Studies undertaken to detect cases of malnutrition: anaemia, Al-Ain, 1994; obesity, 1997; anaemia, Abu Dhabi, 1998;
- Number of physicians per 10,000 of the population: 19.8;
- Average number of hospital beds per 10,000 of the population: 17.9;
- Number of primary health-care facilities per 10,000 of the population: 95.

D. The Ministry of Education and Youth

169. The State accords high priority to all stages of education, which is compulsory at the primary stage and might also be made compulsory at the kindergarten stage. In the academic year 1997/98, the State's budgetary expenditure on education amounted to 3,461,015,000 dirhams, i.e. the equivalent of US$ 1.22 billion.

170. All children at (pre-university) school age, regardless of their nationality, gender or religion, are entitled to enrol at government schools. There are separate schools for boys and girls. Education is free of charge and the schools provide the requisite books and stationery at nominal prices. The official age for enrolment at primary schools is 5.9 to 6 years and the primary stage of education lasts for six years.

171. Schools have been established in all urban and nomadic areas. The following tables show the distribution of schools among the State's educational districts in the academic year 1996/97 when the total number of schools, including vocational (technical) education schools, amounted to 639, of which 285 were for boys, 273 were for girls and 81 were mixed.

Table 18

Distribution of government schools, by educational level and district, in the academic year 1996/97

District	Level	Kindergarten	Kindergarten + primary	Kindergarten + primary + preparatory	Kindergarten + primary + preparatory + secondary	Primary	Primary + preparatory	Primary + preparatory + secondary	Preparatory	Preparatory + secondary	Secondary	Religious education	Technical education			Total
													Industrial	Commercial	Agricultural	
Abu Dhabi	Males					28	2		8	5	5					48
	Females		1		1	28	3		6	5	5					49
	Mixed	10														10
	Total	10	1		1	56	5		14	10	10					107
Al-Ain	Males					23	1	9	6	6	2	1			1	49
	Females		1		9	17	4	2	5	4	4					46
	Mixed	11														11
	Total	11	1		9	40	5	11	11	10	6	1			1	106
Western Region	Males					8	1	6	1	4	1					21
	Females				3	9		3		4						19
	Mixed	6														6
	Total	6			3	17	1	9	1	8	1					46
Total for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi	Males					59	4	15	15	15	8	1			1	118
	Females		2		13	54	7	5	11	13	9					114
	Mixed	27														27
	Total	27	2		13	113	11	20	26	28	17	1			1	259

Table 18 (continued)

Distribution of government schools, by educational level and district, in the academic year 1996/97

District	Level	Kindergarten	Kindergarten + primary	Kindergarten + primary + preparatory	Kindergarten + primary + preparatory + secondary	Primary	Primary + preparatory	Primary + preparatory + secondary	Preparatory	Preparatory + secondary	Secondary	Religious education	Technical education			Total
													Industrial	Commercial	Agricultural	
Dubai	Males		1	1		17	1	2	7	1	5	1	1	1		36
	Females					16	2	2	6	2	5					35
	Mixed	10														10
	Total	10	1	1		33	3	4	13	3	10	1	1	1		81
Sharjah + Sharjah Office in the Eastern Region	Males					23	3	5	7	3	5		1			47
	Females			1	2	23	1	4	7	1	7					46
	Mixed	10				1	1	1								13
	Total	10		1	2	47	5	10	14	4	12		1			106
Ajman	Males					7	1	2	2	1	1	1				15
	Females					7	1	2	2	1	2					15
	Mixed	6														6
	Total	6				14	2	4	4	2	3	1				36
Umm al-Qaiwain	Males					6			1	3	1					11
	Females				1	4		2	1		1					9
	Mixed	3														3
	Total	3			1	10		2	2	3	2					23
Fujairah	Males					9	2	2	2	2	1			1		19
	Females		1			8	2	3	1	3	1					19
	Mixed	6				1										7
	Total	6	1			18	4	5	3	5	2			1		45
Ras al-Khaimah	Males					16	5	7	4	3	2		1		1	39
	Females			1	2	15	4	4	2	3	4					35
	Mixed	14	1													15
	Total	14	1	1	2	31	9	11	6	6	6		1		1	89
Total Area II	Males					78	12	18	23	13	15	2	3	2	1	167
	Females		2	3	5	73	10	17	19	10	20					159
	Mixed	49	1			2	1	1								54
	Total	49	3	3	5	153	23	36	42	23	35	2	3	2	1	380
Grand total	Males					137	16	33	38	28	23	3	3	2	2	285
	Females		4	3	18	127	17	22	30	23	29					273
	Mixed	76	1			2	1	1								81
	Total	76	5	3	18	266	34	56	68	51	52	3	3	2	2	639

Table 19

Overall data on government education, by educational district, in the academic year 1996/97

District		Schools	Classes	Students	Administrative, technical and teaching staff
Abu Dhabi	Males	48	1 034	29 880	2 123
	Females	49	1 019	29 919	2 671
	Mixed	10	116		
	Total	107	2 169	59 799	4 794
Al-Ain	Males	49	1 058	27 517	2 132
	Females	46	1 022	28 056	2 525
	Mixed	11	144		
	Total	106	2 224	55 573	4 657
Western region	Males	21	295	5 831	624
	Females	19	296	5 779	739
	Mixed	6	43		
	Total	46	634	11 610	1 363
Total for Area I (Emirate of Abu Dhabi)	Males	118	2 387	63 228	4 879
	Females	114	2 337	63 754	5 935
	Mixed	27	303		
	Total	259	5 027	126 982	10 814
Dubai	Males	36	656	19 099	1 263
	Females	35	679	20 285	2 205
	Mixed	10	115		
	Total	81	1 450	39 384	3 468
Sharjah	Males	47	854	25 281	1 715
	Females	46	869	25 926	2 604
	Mixed	13	142		
	Total	106	1 865	51 207	4 319
Ajman	Males	15	304	8 846	540
	Females	15	315	9 242	938
	Mixed	6	50		
	Total	36	669	18 088	1 478

Table 19 (continued)

Overall data on government education, by educational district, in the academic year 1996/97

District		Schools	Classes	Students	Administrative, technical and teaching staff
Umm al-Qaiwain	Males	11	144	3 630	292
	Females	9	154	3 687	545
	Mixed	3	27		
	Total	23	325	7 317	837
Fujairah	Males	19	372	10 692	765
	Females	19	386	11 472	1 013
	Mixed	7	77		
	Total	45	835	22 164	1 778
Ras al-Khaimah	Males	39	651	17 950	1 325
	Females	35	620	17 246	1 965
	Mixed	15	125		
	Total	89	1 396	35 196	3 290
Total for Area II	Males	167	2 981	85 498	5 900
	Females	159	3 023	87 858	9 270
	Mixed	54	536		
	Total	380	6 540	173 356	15 170
Grand total	Males	285	5 368	148 726	10 779
	Females	273	5 360	151 612	15 205
	Mixed	81	839		
	Total	639	11 567	300 338	25 984

Kindergartens

172. In the academic year 1996/97, the total number of children attending kindergartens throughout the State amounted to 19,279, of whom 9,655 were male (50.08 per cent) and 9,624 female (49.92 per cent). It is evident, therefore, that there is no notable difference

between the sexes in regard to enrolment at kindergartens. The children were distributed among 824 classes (an average of 23.4 children per class). The following table shows the distribution of kindergarten children, by gender and nationality, in the academic year 1996/97.

Table 20

Kindergarten enrolment

Gender \ Year		First		Second		Total	
		Classes	Children	Classes	Children	Classes	Children
Male	Citizens		3 801	1	5 271	1	9 072
	Non-citizens		265		318		583
	Total		4 066		5 589		9 655
Female	Citizens	2	3 878		5 163	2	9 041
	Non-citizens		271		312		583
	Total		4 149		5 475		9 624
Mixed		351		470		821	
Total	Citizens	353	7 679	471	10 434	824	18 113
	Non-citizens		536		630		1 166
	Total		8 215		11 064		19 279

The primary stage of education

173. In the academic year 1996/97, the total number of children attending primary schools amounted to 151,283, of whom 76,246 were male (50.4 per cent) and 75,037 female (49.6 per cent). This is a clear indicator of the lack of gender discrimination. The primary school students were distributed among 5,935 classes (an average of 25.49 students per class). The following table shows the grade distribution of primary schoolchildren, by gender and nationality, in the academic year 1996/97.

Table 21

Primary school enrolment, by grade

Gender \ Grade		First		Second		Third		Fourth		Fifth		Sixth		Total	
		Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
Male	Citizens	486	7 696	489	7 999	499	8 215	501	8 791	499	8 740	493	8 301	2 967	49 742
	Non-citizens		4 287		4 263		4 480		4 480		4 661		4 333		26 504
	Total		11 983		12 262		12 695		13 271		13 401		12 634		76 246
Female	Citizens	494	7 959	502	8 227	498	8 035	490	8 401	495	8 392	477	8 366	2 956	49 380
	Non-citizens		4 176		4 221		4 455		4 197		4 513		4 095		25 657
	Total		12 135		12 448		12 490		12 598		12 905		12 461		75 037
Mixed		3		3		3		1		1		1		12	
Total	Citizens	983	15 655	994	16 226	100	16 250	992	17 132	995	17 132	971	16 667	5 935	99 122
	Non-citizens		8 463		8 484		8 935		9 174		9 174		8 428		52 161
	Total		24 118		12 710		25 185		26 306		26 306		25 095		151 283

The preparatory stage of education

174. The total number of children attending preparatory schools amounted to 76,173, of whom 38,127 were male (50.05 per cent) and 38,046 female (49.95 per cent). This shows equal enrolment by males and females at the preparatory stage of education. The students were distributed among 2,646 classes (an average of 28.79 students per class). The following table shows the grade distribution of preparatory schoolchildren by gender and nationality.

Table 22

Preparatory enrolment, by gender and citizenship

Gender \ Grade		First		Second		Third		Fourth	
		Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
Male	Citizens	495	9 696	455	8 126	398	6 955	1 348	24 777
	Non-citizens		4 649		4 528		4 173		13 350
	Total		14 345		12 654		11 128		38 127
Female	Citizens	443	9 109	439	8 328	413	8 093	1 295	25 530
	Non-citizens		4 156		4 437		3 923		12 516
	Total		13 265		12 765		12 016		38 046
Mixed		1		1		1		3	
Total	Citizens	939	18 805	895	16 454	812	15 048	2 646	50 307
	Non-citizens		8 805		8 965		8 096		25 866
	Total		27 610		25 419		23 144		76 173

175. Religious instruction is provided at both the primary and preparatory stages of education, beginning at the sixth primary grade and continuing throughout the three-year preparatory stage.

176. The following table shows the distribution of students receiving a religious education by educational district and stage. It is noteworthy that more non-citizens than citizens are receiving a religious education. The combined figure of 499 non-citizens (27 at the primary stage and 472 at the preparatory stage) constitutes a proportion of 74.59 per cent (as compared with 25.41 per cent for citizens) of the total number of students receiving a religious education.

Table 23

Students receiving religious education

Stage and grade \ District			Al-Ain (Emirate of Abu Dhabi)		Dubai		Ajman		Total	
			Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
Primary	Sixth	Citizens	2						2	
		Non-citizens		27						27
		Total		27						27
	Total	Citizens	2						2	
		Non-citizens		27						27
		Total		27						27

Table 23 (continued)

Students receiving religious education

Stage and grade / District			Al-Ain (Emirate of Abu Dhabi)		Dubai		Ajman		Total	
			Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
Preparatory	First	Citizens	5	54	2	13	3	18	10	85
		Non-citizens		82		13		73		168
		Total		136		26		91		253
	Second	Citizens	5	30	1	12	2	7	8	49
		Non-citizens		94		14		58		166
		Total		124		26		65		215
	Third	Citizens	4	21	1	2	2	13	7	36
		Non-citizens		83		15		40		138
		Total		104		17		53		174
	Total	Citizens	14	105	4	27	7	38	25	170
		Non-citizens		259		42		171		472
		Total		364		69		209		642

Special education classes

177. The government primary schools provide special education and rehabilitation services for persons with special needs, including gifted students, slow learners and persons suffering from slight sensorial (auditory or visual) problems. The Ministry provides these services without distinction between citizens and non-citizens and without any discrimination on grounds of religion, gender or race.

178. The following table shows the distribution, by gender and nationality, of (non-gifted) students receiving special education, as well as the number of classes.

Table 24

Special education (non-gifted), by gender and citizenship

Gender / Classes and students		Number of classes	Number of students		
			Citizens	Non-citizens	Total
Total Area II[a]	Male	64	393	50	443
	Female	54	295	52	347
	Total	118	688	102	790
Total for the State	Male	101	578	110	688
	Female	97	478	140	618
	Total	198	1 056	250	1 306

[a] The Ministry of Education of the United Arab Emirates is divided into two departmental areas (Area I covering Abu Dhabi and the Western Region, and Area II covering Dubai and the northern Emirates).

179. The total number of students receiving special education amounted to 1,306, of whom 688 were male (52.68 per cent) and 618 female (47.32 per cent). Most local, Arab and international studies and research show disability and educational problems to be more prevalent among males than females. The students receiving special education were distributed among 198 classes (an average of 6.6 students per class).

180. The Ministry of Education and Youth has shown considerable concern for gifted and outstanding students at all academic levels, as can be seen from the following:

- A Central Higher Committee has been established to formulate programmes and plans to promote the welfare of gifted students and encourage them to display their talents and capabilities through a series of activities and exhibitions at which they can win prizes and awards of merit;

- Their welfare is promoted through resource rooms, which are currently intended for students at the primary stage but will gradually be extended to all academic levels; and

- Psychological and social services are provided with a view to the early discovery and encouragement of gifted and outstanding students. Each case is monitored at the social and family levels and attempts are made to overcome any obstacles impeding the individual's progress.

181. There are 160 special education classes at the government schools. These classes, which are attended by 1,500 male and female students (an average of 6-12 students per class), are endeavouring to achieve the following objectives:

- To develop personal, intellectual, social and educational aptitudes;

- To develop scientific and artistic talents and aptitudes; and

- To integrate the students in school society.

Literacy and adult education

182. Total expenditure on literacy and adult education programmes in the academic year 1995/96 amounted to 6,460,545 UAE dirhams and the illiteracy rate among the population in the year 1996/97 stood at 19.8 per cent, illiteracy being more widespread among males (23 per cent) than among females (16.4 per cent). The number of persons benefiting from the adult education programmes amounted to 18,255, of whom 7,667 were male (40 per cent) and 10,588 female (60 per cent). This is a clear indicator not only of women's interest in education at all levels but also of the encouragement that they are receiving through official governmental policies and women's organizations, particularly the Women's Federation.

183. The State's endeavours to promote education at all levels have led to a notable reduction in the illiteracy rate, which decreased from 56.8 per cent in 1975 to 19.8 per cent in 1995.

Table 25

Education in the State, distributed by level and educational district, in the academic year 1996/97

District	Level and type of education	Kindergarten				Primary				Preparatory			
		Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Male	Female	Mixed	Total
Ajman	Classes			50	50	168	176		344	73	73		146
	Students	550	541		1 091	4 522	4 678		9 200	2 187	2 298		4 485
	Teachers		75		75	193	391		584				
	Administrators		14		14	21	64		85				
Umm al-Qaiwain	Classes			27	27	82	84		166	34	36		70
	Students	250	272		522	2 003	1 888		3 891	823	864		1 687
	Teachers		43		43	110	218		328				
	Administrators		11		11	16	43		59				
Fujairah	Classes			77	77	220	220		440	86	88		174
	Students	1 061	1 026		2 087	5 671	5 703		11 374	2 597	2 695		5 292
	Teachers		102		102	360	387		747				
	Administrators		16		16	43	41		84				
Ras-al-Khaimah	Classes			125	125	357	336		693	163	152		315
	Students	1 366	1303		2 669	9 151	8 209		17 360	4 537	4 419		8 956
	Teachers		175		175	468	732		1 200				
	Administrators		81		81	60	147		207				
Area II	Classes			518	518	1 624	1 637	12	3 273	752	734	3	1 489
	Students	6 197	6 022		12 219	42 738	42 178		84 916	21 911	22 104		44 015
	Teachers		719		719	2 143	3 605		5 748				
	Administrators		206		206	283	676		959				
Total	Classes	1	2	821	824	2 967	2 956	12	5 935	1 348	1 295	3	2 646
	Students	9 655	9 624		19 279	76 246	75 037		151 283	38 127	38 046		76 173
	Teachers		1 127		1 127	4 277	5 930		10 207				
	Administrators		303		303	535	1 013		1 548				

Table 25 (continued)

Education in the State, distributed by level and educational district, in the academic year 1996/97

District	Level and type of education	Secondary				Religious education	Technical education				Total			
		Male	Female	Mixed	Total	(male)	Male	Female	Mixed	Total	Male	Female	Mixed	Total
Ajman	Classes	47	66		113	16					304	315	50	669
	Students	1 192	1 725		2 917	395					8 846	9 242		18 088
	Teachers	237	328		565	36					466	794		1 260
	Administrators	46	66		112	7					74	144		218
Umm al-Qaiwain	Classes	28	34		62						144	154	27	325
	Students	554	663		1 217						3 630	3 687		7 317
	Teachers	137	180		317						247	441		688
	Administrators	29	50		79						45	104		149
Fujairah	Classes	46	78		124		6	11	3	20	372	386	77	835
	Students	996	2 048		3 044		75	236	56	368	10 692	11 472		22 164
	Teachers	262	407		669		12	28	5	45	667	896		1 563
	Administrators	50	60		110			5		5	98	117		215
Ras-al-Khaimah	Classes	119	132		251		5	4	3	12	651	620	125	1 396
	Students	2 703	2 315		6 018		100	66	27	193	17 950	17 246		35 196
	Teachers	591	673		1 264		29	8	11	48	1 107	1 580		2 687
	Administrators	148	157		305		6		4	10	218	385		603
Area II	Classes	510	652	3	1 165	25	28	36	6	70	2 981	3 023	536	6 540
	Students	12 733	17 554		30 287	531	591	714	83	1 388	85 498	87 858		173 356
	Teachers	2 598	3 327		5 925	62	118	69	16	203	5 006	7 651		12 657
	Administrators	567	737		1 304	12	19	9	4	32	894	1 619		2 513
Total	Classes	906	1 107	3	2 016	48	28	61	9	98	5 368	5 360	839	11 567
	Students	21 653	28 905		50 558	1 120	591	119	142	1 925	148 726	151 612		300 338
	Teachers	4 621	5 686		10 307	113	118	2	32	249	9 260	12 743		22 003
	Administrators	928	1 146		2 074	19	19	9	9	37	1 519	2 462		3 981

Table 26

Distribution of administrative, technical and teaching staff, by occupation and educational level, throughout the State in the academic year 1996/97

Level and type of education		Description	Administrative						Technical				Total administrative + technical	Teaching staff	Total administrative + technical + teaching staff
			Principal	Assistant principal	Secretary	School supervisor	Storekeeper	Total	Sociologist	Laboratory technician	Librarian	Total			
Kinder-garten	Female	Citizens	71	69	58	4	24	226	56		12	68	294	638	932
		Non-citizens	4	1	2			7	2			2	9	489	498
		Total	75	70	60	4	24	233	58		12	70	303	1 127	1 430
Primary	Male	Citizens	62	65	37	7	2	173	67	1		68	241	288	529
		Non-citizens	48	36	78	1		163	90	39	2	131	294	3 989	4 283
	Female	Citizens	154	154	180	85	60	633	239	32	70	341	974	2 818	3 792
		Non-citizens	5	2	7	1	3	18	5	9	7	21	39	3 112	3 151
	Total	Citizens	216	219	217	92	62	806	306	33	70	409	1 215	3 106	4 321
		Non-citizens	53	38	85	2	3	181	95	48	9	152	333	7 101	7 434
		Total	269	257	302	94	65	987	401	81	79	561	1 548	10 207	11 755
Preparatory and secondary	Male	Citizens	70	82	41	24	1	218	78		8	86	304	248	552
		Non-citizens	70	54	134	4		262	146	192	24	362	624	4 373	4 997
	Female	Citizens	107	134	185	81	39	546	213	116	55	384	930	2 150	3 080
		Non-citizens	34	14	21		7	76	23	98	19	140	216	3 536	3 752
	Total	Citizens	177	216	226	105	40	764	291	116	63	470	1 234	2 398	3 632
		Non-citizens	104	68	155	4	7	338	169	290	43	502	840	7 909	8 749
		Total	281	568	381	109	47	1 102	460	406	106	972	2 074	10 307	12 381

Table 27

Distribution of administrative, technical and teaching staff, by occupation and educational level, in the Abu Dhabi educational district in the academic year 1996/97

Level and type of education		Description	Administrative						Technical				Total administrative + technical	Teaching staff	Total administrative + technical + teaching staff
			Principal	Assistant principal	Secretary	School supervisor	Storekeeper	Total	Sociologist	Laboratory technician	Librarian	Total			
Kinder-garten	Female	Citizens	10	8	10			28	11		2	13	41	80	121
		Non-citizens												74	74
		Total	10	8	10			28	11		2	13	41	154	195
Primary	Male	Citizens	5	5				10	7			7	17	34	51
		Non-citizens	20	19	28	1		68	31	1	1	33	101	850	951
	Female	Citizens	32	31	39	17	1	120	46	5	17	68	188	413	601
		Non-citizens									3	3	3	648	651
	Total	Citizens	37	36	39	17	1	130	53	5	17	75	205	447	652
		Non-citizens	20	19	28	1		68	31	1	4	36	104	1 498	1 602
		Total	57	55	67	18	1	198	84	6	21	111	309	1 945	2 254
Preparatory and secondary	Male	Citizens	4	9		2		15	6			6	21	59	80
		Non-citizens	16	18	34			68	38	30	5	73	141	883	1 024
	Female	Citizens	17	23	33	16		89	34	13	11	58	147	331	478
		Non-citizens	3		2			5	3	29	3	35	40	706	746
	Total	Citizens	21	32	33	18		104	40	13	11	64	168	390	558
		Non-citizens	19	18	36			73	41	59	8	108	181	1 589	1 770
		Total	40	50	69	18		177	81	72	19	172	349	1 979	2 328

Table 27 (continued)

Distribution of administrative, technical and teaching staff, by occupation and educational level, in the Abu Dhabi educational district in the academic year 1996/97

Level and type of education		Description	Administrative						Technical				Total administrative + technical	Teaching staff	Total administrative + technical + teaching staff
			Principal	Assistant principal	Secretary	School supervisor	Storekeeper	Total	Sociologist	Laboratory technician	Librarian	Total			
Religious education	Males	Citizens													
		Non-citizens													
		Total													
Technical education (males)	Industrial	Citizens													
		Non-citizens													
		Total													
	Commercial	Citizens												8	8
		Non-citizens												9	9
		Total												17	17
	Agricultural	Citizens													
		Non-citizens													
		Total													
Total	Males	Citizens	9	14		2		25	13			13	38	101	139
		Non-citizens	36	37	62	1		136	69	31	6	106	242	1 742	1 984
	Females	Citizens	59	62	82	33	1	237	91	18	30	139	376	824	1 200
		Non-citizens	3		2			5	3	29	6	38	43	1 428	1 471
	Total	Citizens	68	76	82	35	1	262	104	18	30	152	414	925	1 339
		Non-citizens	39	37	64	1		141	72	60	12	144	285	3 170	3 455
		Total	107	113	146	36	1	403	176	78	42	296	699	4 095	4 794

Table 28

Distribution of administrative, technical and teaching staff, by occupation and educational level, throughout the State in the academic year 1996/97

Level and type of education		Description	Administrative						Technical				Total administrative + technical	Teaching staff	Total administrative + technical + teaching staff
			Principal	Assistant principal	Secretary	School supervisor	Storekeeper	Total	Sociologist	Laboratory technician	Librarian	Total			
Religious education	Males	Citizens	2	1				3					3	4	7
		Non-citizens	1	2	3			6	4	5	1	10	16	109	125
		Total	3	3	3			9	4	5	1	10	19	113	132
Technical education (males)	Industrial	Citizens	3	2	1	1	3	10	1			1	11	8	19
		Non-citizens		1	1			2	2	3	1	6	8	110	118
		Total	3	3	2	1	3	12	3	3	1	7	19	118	137
	Commercial	Citizens	2	2				4					4	12	16
		Non-citizens			2			2	2	1		3	5	87	92
		Total	2	2	2			6	2	1		3	9	99	108
	Agricultural	Citizens	2	1	1			4	1			1	5	2	7
		Non-citizens			1			1	1	2		3	4	30	34
		Total	2	1	2			5	2	2		4	9	32	41
Total	Males	Citizens	141	153	80	32	6	412	147	1	8	156	568	562	1 130
		Non-citizens	119	93	219	5		436	245	242	28	515	951	8 698	9 649
	Females	Citizens	332	357	423	170	123	1 405	508	148	137	793	2 198	5 606	7 804
		Non-citizens	43	17	30	1	10	101	30	107	26	163	264	7 137	7 401
	Total	Citizens	473	510	503	202	129	1 817	655	149	145	949	2 766	6 168	8 934
		Non-citizens	162	110	249	6	10	537	275	349	54	678	1 215	15 835	17 050
		Total	635	620	752	208	139	2 354	930	498	199	1 627	3 981	22 003	25 984

Table 29

Number of administrative and teaching staff seconded by women's associations and other bodies in the academic year 1996/97

Seconded by / District		Women's associations			Other bodies	
		Administrators	Teachers	Total	Males	Females
Emirate of Sharjah	Citizens		4	4		
	Non-citizens		1	1		
	Total		5	5		
Ajman	Citizens	6	15	21		
	Non-citizens		9	9		
	Total	6	24	30		
Umm al-Qaiwain	Citizens	2	2	4		
	Non-citizens	2	28	30		
	Total	4	30	34		
Fujairah	Citizens					
	Non-citizens					
	Total					
Ras al-Khaimah	Citizens		9	9		
	Non-citizens		2	2		
	Total		11	11		
Total Area II	Citizens	12	55	67		1
	Non-citizens	2	56	58	2	2
	Total	14	111	125	2	3
Grand total	Citizens	42	107	149	2	4
	Non-citizens	10	245	255	28	11
	Total	52	352	404	30	15

184. Other educational indicators of note are that the average number of students per teacher (government schools only) is 14.8 and that the average number of teachers per class is 1.7.

E. The Ministry of Information and Culture

185. Information plays a vitally important role in contemporary life and is a key element in the influential role of parents and the family in the upbringing of children and the shaping of their personalities and their conscious and unconscious inclinations. Accordingly, States attach considerable importance to the programmes that are designed for child audiences and particularly to the scheduled broadcasting times of certain programmes requiring a public warning concerning the sensitive nature of some of their scenes which could have highly adverse effects on children.

186. The functions of the Ministry of Information and Culture include:

- Responsibility for all aspects of federal information, including radio, television, the press, publications and announcements;

- Coordination of information policy among the Emirates in a manner consistent with the general policy of the Federation;

- Coordination of close collaboration among the member Emirates with a view to the promotion and development of tourism; and

- Any other functions assigned to the Ministry in any other legislation.

187. Accordingly, the Ministry is diligently engaged in the process of licensing publishing houses and information institutions which produce and broadcast cultural, entertainment and educational programmes.

188. General indicators include:

- Children have 28 television programmes per week, which account for 8.5 per cent of the total number of programmes;

- The total number of television broadcasting hours amounts to 680 per week, of which 14 are intended for children (six hours for children under five and eight hours for children over 5 years of age); and

- There are 200 television sets for every 1,000 persons.

Television

189. The television channels broadcast local, Arab and international programmes that are appropriate for children. These programmes include: Holy Koran competitions, the programme "Tales from the Life of the Prophet", cartoon films, the cultural programmes "Memories of the Past" and "Wildlife Sanctuaries" and the local children's programme "The Bank of Knowledge", which are broadcast live by Sharjah Television.

190. Dubai Television presents cartoon films, the children's educational programme "Sources of Knowledge", the live programme "Children Growing Up" and coverage of events of interest to children, festivals, exhibitions and informative, educational and cultural interviews. There are also programmes, such as "Captain", which are presented by children themselves.

191. The Emirates Channel has two children's broadcasts every day. The first includes the serials "Almonds and Sugar" and "Dabdoub Island" and the programme "Children of Tomorrow", while the second includes the serials "The Magic Bucket" and "Kuku and Fufu". The Fourth Channel broadcasts the live children's programme "Chatter" and cartoon films such as "Lady Spoon", "The Great Race" and "Sunbul's Adventures".

Radio

192. Since they began broadcasting, the radio stations have always endeavoured to ensure that an ample proportion of their scheduled programmes are intended for the family, and particularly for children. Over the years, Dubai Radio has broadcast numerous children's programmes, including educational, folklore, instructive, religious, variety and drama programmes.

193. Numerous educational programmes have been presented in the form of 15-minute serials comprising 30-90 episodes providing information, in an enjoyable semi-dramatic manner, on physics, biology, natural phenomena and various other scientific subjects. For example, the radio station has broadcast the following programmes: Tell me, father (30 episodes), Children and love (30 episodes), My daughter and I (30, episodes), My grandfather and I (30 episodes), My dear children (30 episodes), Tomorrow's blossoms (30 episodes), Children love heroes (30 episodes), Professor Nasouh (30 episodes), English lessons for children (30 episodes), The island of birds (30 episodes), The jungle journey (30 episodes), The closely-guarded secret (30 episodes), The tree of knowledge (30 episodes), Children's stories (30 episodes), Children's tales (30 episodes), The lamb (60 episodes), The electronic brain (90 episodes), Why, father? (30 episodes), How? Why? (30 episodes), The young inventor (13 episodes), The children's club (13 episodes), and The children's world (60 episodes).

194. Many other similar programmes have also been presented and Dubai Radio offers children dozens of daily broadcasts in the form of open programmes such as: The Direct Broadcast (3 hours), The Open Meeting (2 hours), and The Evening Encounter (2½ hours). These include educational, health, scientific and other informative broadcasts of interest to the family, children, educationalists, guardians, physicians, sociologists and other persons concerned with children. The daily Family Programme, which is intended primarily for mothers and children, systematically reviews daily social events, particularly those of concern to families. All the State's radio stations pursue this educational policy in their broadcasts for children who, in their capacity as the seeds planted today which will yield tomorrow's harvest, are accorded high priority in the stations' broadcasting plans.

The press and publications

195. Through the Federal Press and Publishing Corporation, the Ministry of Information and Culture publishes numerous children's magazines to which children contribute articles and illustrations. These magazines include *Majid, Zahrat al-Khaleej* every issue of which has a four-page children's section entitled "The Paradise of Mothers and Children", *Mickey*, and *Al-Adhkiya* issued by the Sharjah-based Khaleej Press, Printing and Publishing House, which also publishes, every Tuesday, a periodic supplement entitled "Gulf Youth" in which young persons express their ideas and aspirations. The Bayan Press, Printing and Publishing Corporation also issues a weekly supplement entitled "Bayan" which deals with school and university affairs and other matters of interest to children. The Dubai police produce a magazine called *Khalid* for children and the Sharjah police also publish a magazine called *The Young Policeman*. The Sheikha Fatima bint Hazza' bin Zayed Al-Nahyan prize is awarded to the authors of the best children's stories and the Sheikha Latifa bint Muhammad Al-Maktoum prize is awarded to children who excel in various fields.

196. All the information media are used to promote and defend the rights of the child. It is our hope that the bodies concerned at the United Nations will produce educational, cultural and entertainment programmes like *Open Sesame* which, by adopting a humanitarian, impartial and tolerant approach, will endeavour to develop faith in a future characterized by mutual understanding, love and respect in a world free of environmental pollution, discrimination, poverty, disease and ignorance and over which the doves of peace and justice will fly.

Institutions for the promotion of culture and the development of children's talents

197. The Children's Centre at the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, was established to promote the welfare and culture of children, develop their artistic and cultural talents, occupy their leisure time and satisfy their desire to pursue various hobbies. Since the inauguration of the centre in 1986, it has been endeavouring to provide all the modern cultural and artistic facilities needed to help children to develop their creative talents in a progressive and fruitful manner.

198. The aims of the centre are:

- To develop the latent capacities and abilities of children and give them an opportunity to express them and turn them into creative instruments;

- To utilize the valuable leisure time of the nation's children in a manner more beneficial to them and to it;

- To establish a solid foundation of patriotism in the hearts and minds of children;

- To build a protective shield for the nation from the ingenuity and innovative talents of its outstanding children; and

- To provide an exemplary means to ensure the protection and welfare of children.

199. The centre is striving to achieve these aims by:

(a) Coordinating its planning and implementation activities with other cultural institutions and centres concerned with children's affairs in the State and abroad; and

(b) Availing itself of the services of highly competent persons in various fields of activity.

Activities

200. The centre publishes *Al-Anoud*, a seasonal magazine written and managed by children, under the supervision of professors, writers and poets, the didactic aim of which is to enhance children's poetic and story-writing talents. Some children have shown themselves to be highly gifted in the art of reciting poetry and writing short stories.

201. Mental agility always needs stimulation and patterns of thought always need training. To this end, children are taught the basic principles of the game of chess and are given an opportunity to formulate their own game strategies in order to enable them to develop their mental agility and prepare themselves for local and international competitions and tournaments.

202. The centre has more than 50 videotapes for educational and entertainment purposes which are shown at periodic intervals in the Centre.

203. The Cultural Foundation keeps up to date in the field of cinema by screening the latest and best international films for children.

204. In the month of February of every year, the Children's Centre organizes an annual children's festival which comprises a number of cultural, artistic and entertainment activities, as well as cultural competitions at which prizes are awarded to the winners. The next children's festival is due to be held in February 2000.

205. The centre organizes a number of exhibitions of children's paintings, calligraphy and cartoons and also hosts, in collaboration with the competent authorities, exhibitions by gifted foreign children.

206. During the summer and mid-term school holidays, the centre organizes recreational and cultural excursions for children inside the State in order to enrich their knowledge of their heritage and environment and familiarize them with their country and its seven Emirates. Regular visits are also organized to various cultural institutions and public information agencies.

Courses held at the centre

207. The computer science section, which has 40 machines and a large number of educational and entertaining programmes specially designed for children, is supervised by specialists who give introductory courses to teach basic computer skills, as well as more advanced courses, particularly during the summer holidays.

208. In calligraphy, children are trained to write characters, and subsequently words and sentences, in the *naskh* and the *ruq'a* scripts with a view to improving their Arabic handwriting as far as possible.

209. Children start by reciting and memorizing the Holy Koran, beginning with the thirtieth followed by the twenty-ninth part, initially without applying the special rules of pronunciation and intonation, which are taught at a later stage.

210. For painting classes, the centre employs talented art teachers experienced in dealing with children in order to develop their artistic sense. The centre provides all the requisite equipment, including pens, brushes and paint, so that the children can produce the highest quality work.

211. Female ballet instructors choose young girls of an appropriate age (up to 10 years) and stature in order to train them in ballet movements and rhythms.

212. In music, children are trained to play their favourite instruments under the supervision of a music teacher specialized therein. The centre provides a piano and some other musical instruments. These are only a few examples of the courses and activities organized at the centre throughout the year. The centre keeps a record of students who excel in these courses and awards them prizes to encourage them to further develop their creative talents and performance.

213. The centre receives new stories from authors hoping to win the Sheikha Fatima bint Hazza' Al-Nahyan prize, which is awarded for the best new story written especially for children in an elegant style in such a way as to provide children with useful historical and cultural information and moral values.

214. The centre is pursuing a policy of non-discrimination between the children of nationals and foreign residents and makes its services available to all children, including those with special needs, regardless of their nationality.

215. Numerous safety and health standards are enforced, including the obligatory provision of fire extinguishers, first aid equipment and facilities for persons with special needs.

216. Every student is entitled to express his or her views through participation in all the activities organized by the centre and can also state his or her preference for certain activities through a questionnaire.

217. The following table shows the number of annual and summer courses organized by the Children's Centre at the Cultural Foundation from 1991 to 1997.

Table 30

Courses at the Children's Centre

Activity	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
Koran recitation and memorization	-	80	-	-	146	221	113	560
Painting	-	294	338	-	600	548	511	191
Arabic calligraphy	131	260	631	264	133	446	434	2 299
Chess	-	68	70	-	373	100	-	611
Music	-	35	80	-	-	72	236	423
Computer science	289	380	380	676	827	1 004	318	3 874
Theatre	-	41	-	-	-	-	-	41
Ballet	-	-	74	19	81	47	128	349
Piano	-	-	19	17	20	22	9	87
Journalism	-	19	-	-	18	16	17	70
Art work	-	60	134	25	90	-	-	309
Photography	-	19	-	-	-	-	19	38
Total	420	1 312	1 598	949	2 118	2 419	1 785	10 601

218. The Higher Council for Children Sharjah, was established under the terms of Decree No. 5 of 1995 promulgated by His Highness Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, in view of His Highness' belief that children constitute our hope for a better future and that promotion and protection of the rights of the child are the best ways to develop the nation.

1. Participation by children in decision-making

219. Within the context of the measures taken to encourage children to exercise their right to express their views, and in order to train them to properly understand and solve issues with which they might be faced in the future, it was proposed that a Children's Parliament be organized by the Council's Programming Unit for Children's Centres. The first Parliament, organized in September 1997 under the slogan "Children in danger", was chaired by the child Hassan Abdullah Mubarak and attended by children from the children's centres and the Sharjah educational district and also by senior officials and representatives of Sharjah Television, Sharjah Municipality, the Sharjah Educational District and the Sharjah Police and Civil Defence.

220. During its meetings, the first Parliament discussed a number of the principal problems and dangers with which children were faced at school, on the roads and at home, such as:

(a) Questions of domestic and environmental security and safety:

- Violence against children;
- Ignorance of the Traffic Code;
- The absence of endeavours to make families more aware of the risk of accidents in the home;

(b) Social, information and educational questions:

- Foreign female servants;
- Satellite broadcasts;
- The school satchel;

(c) Health issues:

- Ongoing monitoring of children's health;
- Diseases of the respiratory system and dental hygiene; and
- Publication of vital statistics.

221. Accordingly, the children made the following recommendations and proposals to the officials attending the Parliament:

- To provide appropriate equipment and treatment for emergency cases at school clinics;

- To accord priority to children at specialized dental, ENT and other clinics;

- To include a dental treatment unit as part of the school health system;

- To establish appropriately equipped children's clinics in remote areas; and

- To promulgate laws and legislation to ensure that the requirements for children's safety are met.

222. The Parliament held its second two-day session in September 1998 under the slogan "Children's security" and discussed the following principal issues:

- Social security for children (the question of the effects of immigrant labour);

- Information security (violence in the information media);

- Traffic safety and criminal security (school bus accidents and assaults on children);

- Educational security (beatings at school, air conditioning, school satchels); and

- Health security (itinerant salesmen, private clinics).

223. The Parliament made recommendations concerning ways to ensure children's security in the following fields:

- Information: Media programmes for children, and particularly those which have an adverse impact on Islamic religious principles and time-honoured Arab traditions, should be monitored. The need to establish a children's television channel was also repeatedly emphasized;

- Education: School buildings and equipment should be properly maintained in order to ensure that they meet the safety requirements. School buses should also meet the safety requirements and a supervisor should be assigned to keep their student passengers under surveillance;

- Health: Emphasis was placed on the need for stricter control of itinerant salesmen, who should be prohibited from selling their goods in the vicinity of schools in order to protect children from the dangers posed by foodstuffs that fail to meet health standards; and

- Traffic safety: In accordance with the recommendations of the first Parliament, public awareness campaigns had actually been conducted, in collaboration with the school administrative authorities, to ensure the safety of children.

224. Finally, the Parliament proposed coordination with similar Arab children's parliaments and recommended that families should participate fully in the guidance and counselling of children through frank discussions.

2. Training of the staff of children's institutions

225. Article 2, paragraph 8, of the Decree establishing the Higher Council for Children at Sharjah stipulated that one of the principal functions of the Council would be to propose and implement training programmes to improve the standard of performance of the staff of the various public, private and voluntary institutions and bodies concerned with children. Accordingly, the Council held a series of workshops with a view to achieving that aim.

The children's literary workshop

226. This first children's cultural workshop was held from 7 to 9 May 1996 with a view to promoting the use of literature in an appropriate form and manner so that it could be understood and enjoyed by children and resuscitating and reshaping folklore while, at the same time, retaining its original spirit so that legends would not lose their intrinsic beauty. The legend "Dinoh and Arbab" formed the subject of this highly successful workshop, which was attended by a number of specialized painters and authors in addition to many children presenting their paintings and written works. The workshop made the following important recommendations:

- The documents of the Children's Literary Workshop concerning local folk tales should be printed;

- An annual children's literary workshop should be organized for children with creative talents;

- A Children's Theatre, comprising a drama group and a puppet group, should be established;

- The Ministry of Education was invited to encourage school theatrical activities at all educational levels; and

- A bibliography of books written for Arab children should be published.

The puppet and shadow theatre workshop

227. The purpose of this workshop, which was held from 26 October to 9 November 1996, was to familiarize the participants with the techniques of the art of puppet and shadow theatre and the potential benefits of its use in kindergartens and other educational establishments

through the preparation and staging of theatrical performances based on carefully selected folk tales, and to attempt to form a specialized group to present good-quality theatrical and folklore educational programmes for children.

228. This workshop was attended by about 40 persons working with children in the following institutions: the children's Cultural Centres, the Sharjah Humanitarian Services City, and the Ministry of Education (the kindergarten, School Theatre and Educational Aids Departments).

229. The recommendations made by this workshop included the following:

- Regular puppet theatre shows should be arranged through the workshops and other ongoing activities organized by the Council;

- A special puppet theatre should be established at the Children's Cultural Centres, for the first time in the Gulf region, in order to benefit from the potential capacities of their staff to stage good performances; and

- The script of the puppet play "Bird of Good Omen", a popular UAE folk tale which was presented as the keynote on the workshop's agenda, should be printed and a video cassette of the performance should be prepared for distribution.

The children's book-cover workshop

230. The purpose of this workshop, which was held from 17 to 18 March 1997, was to develop children's artistic taste; stimulate their imagination; encourage them to be creative; familiarize publishers of children's books with the generally-accepted principles concerning the design of children's book covers, which should be consistent with the content of the book; and train children to abstract the literary content of a story or a book and convert it into an artistic work. The workshop was of benefit to the following:

- Supervisors and activity leaders at Children's Cultural Centres;

- The staff of kindergartens and of the Curricula and Textbook Department and the Libraries Department of the Ministry of Education;

- The Sharjah Educational District;

- The Library Division of the Sharjah Department of Culture and Information; and

- *The Young Policeman* magazine produced by the Sharjah police.

The children's library workshop

231. The purpose of this workshop, which was held from 23 to 24 December 1997, was to define the educational role, content and specifications of children's libraries, as the basic means to develop the culture of children of all age groups, and to propose ways to train children's library supervisors. The workshop was attended by: library supervisors at Children's Cultural

Centres; the Sharjah Educational District; the Library Science and Information Technology Programme, Kuwait University; Sharjah University; the American University at Sharjah; the Sharjah Girls' Clubs; the Ministry of Education and Youth; the Libraries Department of Dubai Municipality; and the Sharjah Government's Department of Culture and Information.

The children's scientific laboratories workshop

232. The purpose of this workshop, which was held from 14 to 16 April 1998, was to familiarize participants with ways to teach modern science to the younger generation, develop their skills and provide them with opportunities to acquire all types of knowledge since, in the present-day education system, scientific laboratories are indispensable in order to teach the younger generation and enable them to meet the growing challenges of scientific and technological progress. The workshop was attended by participants from the Emirates Scientific Club, the Children's Cultural Centres, the College of Technology, Ajman, Sharjah University, and the Ministry of Education and Youth.

3. Child welfare and development

233. One of the main aims of the Higher Council for Children at Sharjah is to ensure an appropriate environment for the development of the child's personality, to foster the child's literary, artistic and scientific talents and to provide a suitable atmosphere to encourage the child to think in a scientific and critical manner. To this end, the Council has established Children's Cultural Centres in order to enable children to engage, spontaneously and freely, in their various hobbies in a manner consistent with their inclinations, wishes and capacities. The Children's Cultural Centres offer numerous activities.

234. Artistic activities are intended to develop the child's artistic concepts and imagination, derived from the Arab and international heritage, through a system of art studios. Courses are also offered in graphics, poster art, sculpture, ceramics and other visual and fine arts. Musical activities include national and religious songs, poetry set to music, individual and group practice and operetta.

235. Religious education courses include memorization of the Holy Koran, the life and traditions of the Prophet and the art of oratory and self-reliance. Some weeks are dedicated to certain subjects, such as the Week of the Companions and the Week of Stories from the Koran.

236. Literary and library activities include numerous cultural programmes in the fields of poetry, short stories and wall magazines, in addition to library activities and training in the art of elocution and story writing. The editorial staff of the magazine in which children show the most outstanding talents in some literary fields receive commendations. Cultural, scientific, poetry and theatre weeks are also organized.

237. Computer activities consist primarily in:

- A programme to teach the basic principles of computer science and operating systems, in addition to some games and graphic exercises;

- An advanced programme in which children with more highly developed computer skills carry out projects such as the preparation of activity magazines, congratulatory cards, tables and simple programmes; and

- Preparation of courses at the Scientific Museum, where some weeks are dedicated to educational games.

238. Although these activities are popular with children throughout the year, particular emphasis is placed on the acquisition of computer skills and know-how during the summer holidays when children are given an opportunity to participate in specialized activities and training courses which conclude with an annual festival at which the results of the children's competitions are announced.

239. Numerous other intellectual and sports activities, cinema shows and theatrical performances are organized for children, as well as a children's health awareness programme, visits, excursions, games and intellectual and entertaining competitions.

4. Survey of the situation of children at Sharjah

240. The Higher Council for Children is conducting a survey of the situation of children in the Emirate of Sharjah in order to determine the number of children in the Emirate, evaluate their situation and the quality of the services available to them and analyse the policies and programmes that are being pursued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Youth, the Ministry of Health, juvenile institutions, the Humanitarian Services City at Sharjah, social, cultural and sports clubs, universities, colleges and specialized educational institutes.

241. The purpose of the survey is to assess the future prospects for the development of children in the Emirate of Sharjah in the light of the general long-term objectives that the Council is endeavouring to achieve.

242. The Council is also currently in the process of establishing a specialized information centre containing data, statistics and studies on children in the Emirate of Sharjah and in the United Arab Emirates as a whole.

The private sector

243. Women's associations are endeavouring to provide a full range of charitable social services and activities with a view to enabling families to fulfil their national duty, endeavouring to solve the problems faced by women and helping to find solutions to family problems in order to preserve family cohesion.

244. The following women's associations are operating in the United Arab Emirates: the Women's Federation, based in Abu Dhabi; the Abu Dhabi Women's Development Association, with branches; the Dubai Women's Development Association, with branches; the Sharjah

Women's Development Association; The Umm al-Mu'minin Women's Association at Ajman; the Umm al-Qaiwain Women's Association; and the Ras al-Khaimah Women's Development Association.

245. The activities of the women's associations can be summarized as follows:

- Promotion of social and health awareness and education among women, regardless of whether they are wives, mothers or young girls, so that their children can subsequently derive direct benefit therefrom;

- Support for women's activities and adult education and literacy programmes in order to enable women to play their role in the family and in society as a whole;

- Encouragement of breastfeeding;

- Family counselling in order to make mothers more aware of the importance of the stage of childhood; and

- Cooperation with all the bodies concerned with a view to curbing the phenomenon of reliance on foreign nursemaids, which has adverse effects on the health and psychological upbringing of children, and urging mothers to play their natural role in the family.

246. The Women's Committee organizes child-related activities at its annual children's exhibition at which issues concerning children are discussed and mothers are warned against erroneous childcare practices and made aware of the best ways to deal with various patterns of child behaviour.

247. In addition to the weekly programme through which children learn to be well behaved, the women's associations receive children from 6 to 12 years of age in order to occupy their leisure time during the summer through the summer clubs programme which provides behavioural counselling and endows children with Islamic concepts through memorization of the Holy Koran, studies on the life of the Prophet, competitions, excursions and camps.

248. Activities for young girls are organized by the Girls' Clubs, which provide guidance by showing Islamic videotapes and arranging excursions, field visits, competitions, festivals, symposia, Holy Koran memorization programmes and cultural lectures.

249. During the social exhibition that is held every year during Family Week, social issues of concern to Muslim women in the Emirates are discussed and positive and negative aspects of attitudes and forms of behaviour are reviewed together with ways to solve these problems.

250. Summer courses are held to occupy the leisure time of young girls and mothers in a beneficial manner. There are cultural, scientific and social courses, English-language courses and courses on the art of Arabic calligraphy, recitation of the Holy Koran, and Islamic jurisprudence.

Humanitarian associations

251. These are international non-governmental charitable humanitarian organizations comprising a number of administrative departments, including the Women's Committee, which engage in the following activities:

- Improvement of the standard of living of poor families by helping them to acquire simple means of production;

- Promotion of the welfare of children by establishing kindergartens, paying the cost of education and school satchels, catering for the needs of orphans and organizing summer programmes to occupy the leisure time of children;

- Provision of social aid for needy families through direct cash and in-kind assistance and the family sponsoring programme; and

- Provision of training for some families in order to turn them into productive units through courses in tailoring, dressmaking and other crafts.

252. The principal humanitarian organizations include Dar al-Birr, the Dubai Charitable Association, The Red Crescent, the Emirates Association for the Welfare and Rehabilitation of the Disabled, the Fujairah Charitable Association, Beit al-Khair, the Juvenile Education and Welfare Association, the Centre for the Aged and Disabled, the Umm al-Qaiwain Charitable Association, and the Emirates Thalassaemia Association.

253. Bodies that contributed to the preparation of this report include the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Youth, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi (the Children's Centre) and the Higher Council for Children, Sharjah.